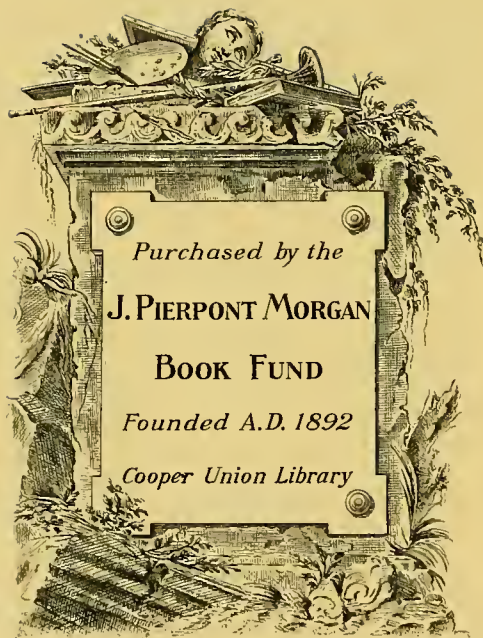




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THE RENAISSANCE : ITS ART AND LIFE

FLORENCE

(1450-1550)

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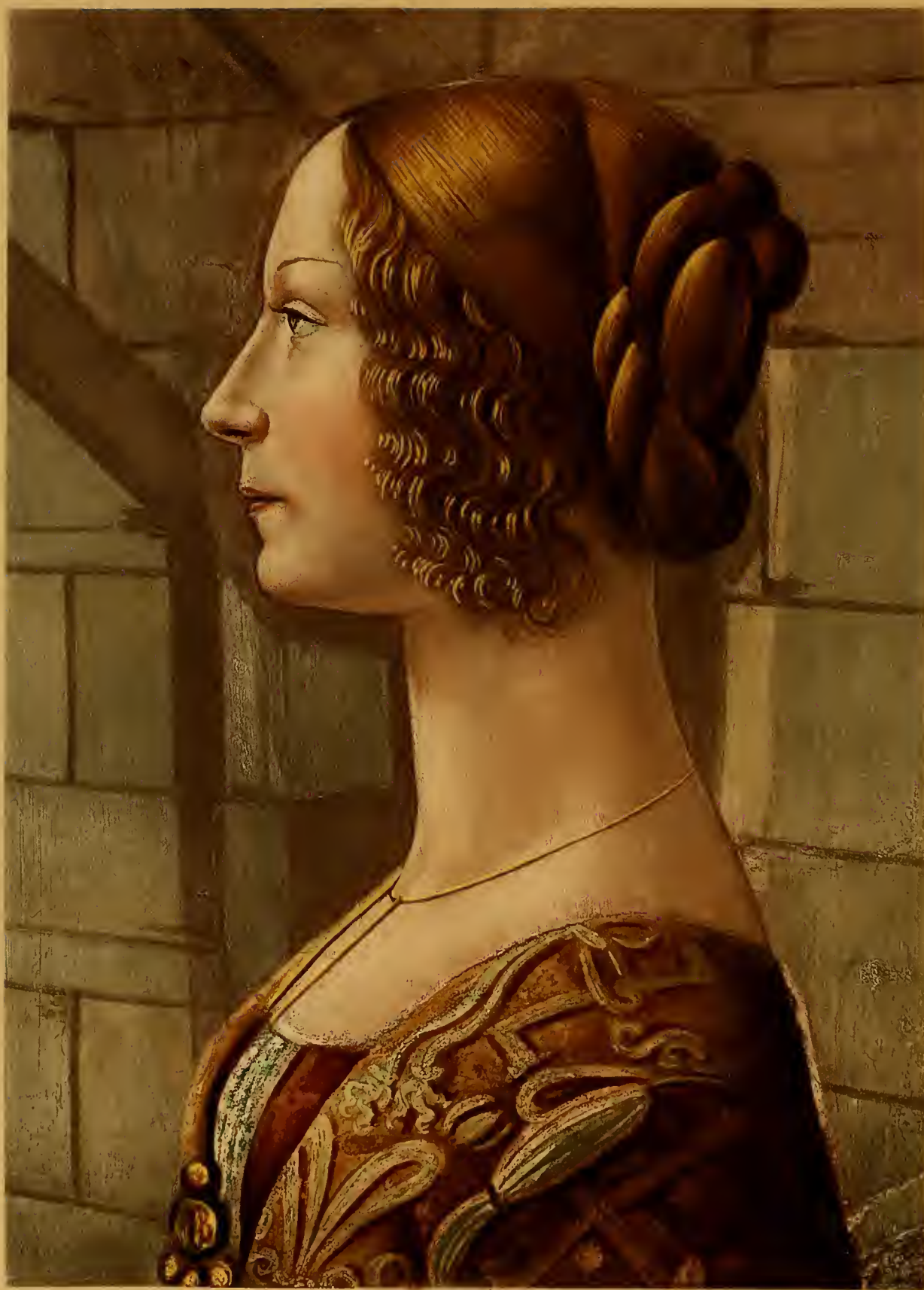
FLORENCE (1450-1550)

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GIOVANNA TORNABUONI.

(Detail from the Fresco of "The Visitation.")

Fac-simile in colours.

By DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO.

(Santa Maria Novella, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.

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THE RENAISSANCE : ITS ART AND LIFE

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FLORENCE

(1450-1550)

BY

SELWYN BRINTON, M.A.



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KNIGHTS ENGAGED IN BATTLE
From the Painting by PAOLO DONI, called PAOLO UCCELLO.

(Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

Photo Alinari, Florence



THE RENAISSANCE : ITS ART AND LIFE

FLORENCE (1450-1550)

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW LEARNING. .



IN the eighth century Italy had become completely over-run by the barbarians. The Goth, the Hun, the Frank, the Lombard had succeeded one another, carrying fire and sword through the land, blotting out the ancient culture of life and reducing the once Imperial race to servitude.

The Lombards represent the last wave of these invading hordes; and at the time just mentioned the Lombard Monarchy was dominant in Northern Italy (568-774). Thirty Dukedoms or Marquisates had beneath them numerous Counts or Vavasors, who in their turn could call their dependents to arms : the feudal system, the outcome of the fear

and military necessity of the invader, was in some parts already applied by the barbarian who held Italy beneath his feet.

But yet the old past of Roman power was not entirely dead. Its memory survived in two still living forces; in the Church, who, mistress within the Eternal City, had inherited from the departed Cæsars their claim to universal sovereignty; in the Cities, which, where they had survived those years of pillage and bloodshed which marked the fall of Rome, were still proud to consider themselves as direct descendants of the Roman *Municipia*. While without the city the land is covered with castles, and tilled by the degraded serfs of the new feudal lord, within its walls the Count holds sway beside the Bishop. But it is to the latter, as champion of their Church, as a link with their past greatness, that the sympathies of the citizens turn in their troubles. Then some new exaction of the feudal ruler, some act of injustice more flagrant than usual sets these elements into a blaze. The citizens fly to arms. The Count is driven to his own stronghold in the open country. Walls arise, or are strengthened, about the old *municipium*; the Bishop forms a temporary government within the city, with at his side the better class of burghers; and the Italian Commune is started on its career.

Milan is an example of this development, and her Archbishop Heribert, who devised the *Caroccio*, the great war-car of the Commune, drawn by oxen with its altar and ministrant priest, is the hero of this earliest revolution; the forgotten word—that vivifying word of Liberty—is heard again, and beside it the words *Popolo* and *Parlamento*, as meaning government by the people for the people's good.

But *Popolo* has here and onwards through Italian political history a more restricted sense than has its modern equivalent: it does not mean the people at large, even within the City or State but those burghers only, who from the first had claimed, and had later obtained, this privilege of civic rule. The distinction is essential to Italian politics, and is often our one thread through these tortuous and confused civic revolutions. The *Popolo* itself becomes divided into first and second orders, into (as at Flo-

rence) *popolo grasso* (fat or wealthy) and *popolo minuto*; and without these privileged orders there yet remains the unenfranchised mass of citizens, who constantly make their voices heard.

Florence herself is a very perfect example of these conditions of political existence. The city here seems almost organic, a living thing (as Macchiavelli recognised), struggling always, yet struggling vainly, to develop, to complete her political organism; and at the same time intensely self-conscious, intensely critical of and interested in herself.

For this constitution of Florence is as complicated as it is constantly varying. The turning point in its evolution is the year 1292, when — as Varchi says, “The people overcame the nobles (*grandi*) and passed the Ordinances of Justice against them, whereby no nobleman could exercise any magistracy; so that such of the patricians as desired to be able to hold office had to enter the ranks of the people (as did many great Houses of quality) and matriculate into one of the Arts.... The Arts were these. (1) Judges and Notaries. (2) The Art of Calimala (cloth-weaving). (3) Of Exchange. (4) Wool. (5) Silk. (6) Physicians and Apothecaries, (7) and Furriers.” These were called the Greater Arts; and beside these there were the Lesser Arts, such as those of Butchers, Shoemakers, Blacksmiths, Linen-drapers, Vintners, Inn keepers, Carpenters, Bakers, etc., making twenty-one Arts in all. Varchi adds — “The last fourteen were called Lesser Arts; whoever was enrolled or matriculated into one of these was said to rank with the lesser; and though there were in Florence many other trades than these, yet having no guild of their own, they were associated to one or other of those that I have named.”

Each Art had a mansion, large and noble, where they assembled, appointed officers and gave account of debit and credit to all the members of the Guild.... These Arts, the greater as well as the lesser have varied in numbers at different times, and often have not only been rivals, but even foes amongst themselves. Yet after long dispute it was finally settled that the Gonfalonier could not be chosen from the Lesser, but should always rank with the Greater, and that in all other offices and magistracies

the Lesser should always have a fourth and no more. Consequently, of the eight Priors, two were always of the Lesser; of the Twelve three.... and so on through all the magistracies.

Nardi, too, in his account of the Florentine constitution says — “After the freedom regained by the expulsion of the Duke of Athens, and the humbling of the nobles, regularity for the future in the Government might have been expected, since a very great equality among the burghers had been established. The city too had been divided into quarters and the supreme Magistracy of the Republic assigned to the eight priors, called the *Signori priori di Libertà*, together with the Gonfalonier of Justice. The eight priors were chosen two for each quarter: the Gonfalonier as their chief, differed in no respect from his colleagues save in precedence of dignity; and as the fourth part of the civic honours appertained to the Lesser Arts their turn kept always coming round to that quarter to which the Gonfalonier belonged. This magistracy remained for two whole months always living and sleeping in the Palace; in order that they might be able to attend with greater diligence to the affairs of the Commonwealth in concert with their Colleagues, who were the sixteen gonfaloniers of the Companies of the People, and the twelve *buoni uomini*, or special advisers of the Signory. These magistrates collectively, in a body, were called the College, or else the Signory and the Colleagues.”

Turning yet once again to Varchi we find that “the whole city of Florence is divided into four quarters, the first of which takes in the whole of that part which is now called “Beyond the Arno” (Oltr’ Arno)” and the chief church of this district gives it the name of Santo Spirito. The other three quarters, which embrace all that is called “This side Arno,” also take their names from their chief churches, and are the quarters of Santa Croce, Santa Maria Novella and San Giovanni. Each of these four quarters has its standard (gonfalone).... each standard has its standard-bearer (gonfaloniere).... their office being to run with arms whenever they are called by the Gonfaloniere of Justice, and to defend, each under his own ensign, the Palace of the Signory, and to fight for the people’s liberty.

A NOBLE FLORENTINE LADY.

(Detail from the Fresco of the "Birth of St. John")

By DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO.

(Church of Santa Maria Novella, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



We may note here the immense importance attached to that symbol of civic life, the Palace of the Signoria. Again and again in these pages we shall find the first effort of the conspirator (whether popular or Medicean) is to get inside the Palace, and to hold it : that first step gained the rest seemed to him pretty easy, but its failure meant exile or instant death.

The reader who has followed this fairly clear account which I have summarized (leaving out less essential features) from the Florentine writers, will see at once that a large number of the citizens were either without any civic rights at all, or possessed these to a limited extent only. In a word the "popolo" was not the people, — but only a portion of the people who held, and fully intended to keep in their hands, the government of their own city. It is no less obvious that there was almost certain to follow, in course of time, an effort on the part of the unenfranchised to attain civic rights, or to complete what rights they had ; and this happened at Florence in the following manner. Even the Guelph nobles had, as we have seen, by the Ordinances of Justice (1292) been driven from the City, and deprived for the future of all political office ; and the citizens themselves had been divided into twenty-one corporations of arts and trades, from the seven higher 'Arts' of which — the *Arti Maggiori* — the magistrates of the Republic were mainly taken. But among the rich families who have held the power in Florence with, on the whole, success to the State, a new aristocracy had gradually formed itself of the so-called *nobili popolani* (nobles from the "popolo") ; and these really formed a limited Guelph oligarchy. They deliberately used the "law of admonition" (which was still in force against the entrance of any Ghibelline noble into political life) to prevent any *novus homo*, any new family from entering into their number. At the head of this oligarchy stood the great House of the Albizzi, which had given the distinguished political leader, Maso degli Albizzi, to the Republic : against them were the families of the Ricci, Strozzi and Alberti, who had come later to the front, and with these were ranged the Medici, who now first come into political prominence. It was Salvestro de' Medici, in fact, who, in 1378, when he was holding the office

of Gonfaloniere of the Republic, proposed to abolish the "law of admonition" which had been put to such unfair use by the Albizzi and their friends. The College of the Signory rejected his proposal, but Salvestro next appealed to a Council of the people, and finally to the people themselves : popular feeling was entirely on his side, and the law he proposed was carried by an immense majority.

But behind this proposal of the "Medici" lay really the popular craving for an equal and extended franchise ; and the people, having once felt their power, were not inclined to stop half way. It was now proposed that the "law of admonition" should be cancelled in the past as well as the future ; that the "lesser arts" should furnish members of the magistracy in the same proportion as the "greater ;" and that three new 'arts' should be created to include the dyers, weavers and workers in the wool trade, who were at present left out of the franchise entirely. The College of the Signory, which we have seen already to have been essentially conservative, endeavoured to crush this new popular movement by arresting one of its leaders, and putting him to torture. So far from crushing it they only put a match into a powder magazine. The "Ciompi," as these wool workers were nicknamed, and many others of the lower class of artisans flew to arms at the news of this outrage : they stormed the Palace of the Podestà, and later that of the Signory. One of their number, named Michele Lando, had seized the Gonfalone or Standard of the Republic ; and as he marched with it, barefooted, at the head of the mob, he was suddenly proclaimed by his followers as Gonfaloniere. He was, in fact, actually set by them in that capacity at the head of the Republic, and shewed himself a man of ability and a credit to his post. He quickly restored order, and repressed with a firm hand the excesses of his own party.

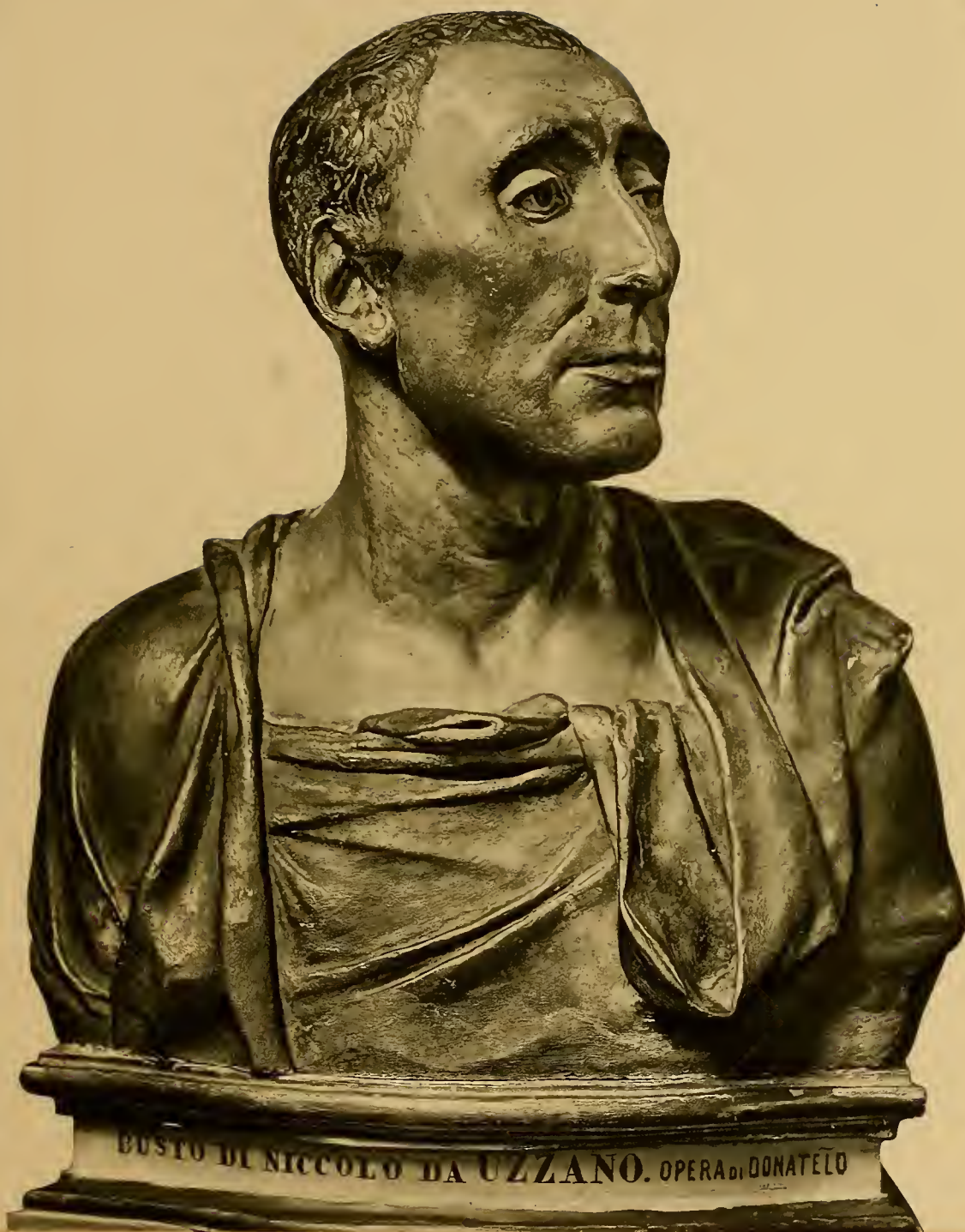
At the next election Salvestro de' Medici, with an Alberti and a Scali as his colleagues, found himself at the head of the Government. The Albizzi, who seems to have attempted a revolution were condemned and brought to the scaffold ; but the new rulers could not agree among themselves. One of their number, Giorgio Scali — who had stormed and pil-

PORTRAIT BUST OF NICCOLO DA UZZANO.

By DONATO DI BETTO BARDI, called DONATELLO.

(National Museum, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.





laged (1382) the Palace of the Captain of the People — was condemned by his own colleagues, and executed; and a reaction in favour of the Albizzi and the Guelph party made itself apparent seven days later. By the summary process of *parlamento* and *balia* a new government was created, consisting of the nobles, merchants and citizens belonging to the Greater Arts; Benedetto Alberti and Michele Lando were exiled, and the oligarchy of the *nobili popolani* was more firmly established than ever. This inconclusive outbreak of the Ciompi is none the less of the highest importance to our survey: it makes (1378) — just as much as the exclusion from political privileges of the nobles (1292) by the Ordinances of Justice — a decisive landmark in Florentine political life. Had the just demands of the Lesser Arts, and, behind them, of the proletariat, to a share in the franchise and political power been then granted the history of Florence might have been — we may almost say certainly would have been — very different. The movement was completely crushed, the oligarchy — which it is but fair to admit continued to rule the State with brilliant success and great political ability — was re-imposed; but the feeling of resentment, of injustice remained, and was certain to bear fruit.

The Medici, as we have seen, had been the helpers of the people in their struggle for political justice: and this fact was never forgotten, either by the people themselves, or by that astute politician and remarkable personality Cosimo de' Medici, when he became the head of his House. His father, Giovanni de Medici, had been Gonfaloniere in 1421; for though the now dominant Albizzi regarded these rivals with suspicion they could not entirely exclude them from office. Cosimo himself (born in 1389) had been "Priore di Liberta" in 1416; in the meantime his commercial position had made him one of the richest men in Florence, while his own taste for culture filled the Palace of the Medici in Via Larga with artists, poets, and with the leaders in Florentine intellectual life.

Even without taking any very direct part in political life Cosimo's position was now such that nothing of importance could take place in the State without his opinion being considered; on the other hand the great leader

of the ruling party, Maso degli Albizzi, had now passed away, and the no less eminent Republican statesman Niccolo d'Uzzano had now (1427) followed him, leaving at the head of the oligarchy the impetuous and arrogant Rinaldo degli Albizzi. A series of brilliant political successes had increased the frontiers of the Republic, had brought neighbouring Pisa (1406) under the sway of Florence, and carried the prestige of the ruling oligarchy to its highest point: but the swing of the political pendulum brought reverses, and their popularity was already on the wane.

Cosimo's position however remained purely critical. He did not approve of the policy pursued in the years following Niccolo d'Uzzano's death, and among his own friends he did not hesitate to criticize the existing mismanagement and financial peculation: but this negative attitude so exasperated the fiery Rinaldo that he determined, while the power was yet within his hands, to use it to crush his critic and enemy. The great bell was heard (on the 7th. September, 1433) to toll out from the tower of the Palace of the Signory, summoning the citizens of Florence to a "Parlamento" within the Piazza on which that Palace looks out: there the issues of those narrow streets which enter or issue from this famous Piazza della Signoria were carefully guarded — but guarded, most probably, by Rinaldo's own partisans.

According to the custom of the Republic a *Balia*, or Committee of Public Safety, was then and there voted by acclamation, and invested with the full powers of the State. By its authority Cosimo de' Medici was summoned to the Palace, and imprisoned within its tower. The hours which followed must have been the most anxious of his long life. He was at the mercy of a vindictive enemy, and even the food given him (for two days he preferred to starve) might contain poison. A friendly gaoler reassured him by partaking of it first himself, and through him he sent a large sum of money, which he had hidden on his person, to the man who was to be his judge, Bernardo Guadagni. Bernardo pocketed the money quietly; but when the day of trial came — to the surprise of all — he voted for Cosimo's exile, but not his death.

NICCOLO MACCHIAVELLI.

Terra-cotta of the Fifteenth Century.

(The property of the Societa Colombaria, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



Rinaldo saw his enemy escape from his bonds, with the knowledge and the fear that some day his own time might come. In fact within a year of Cosimo's exile (1434) a new Signory was elected, with Donati as its president; and Rinaldo found himself summoned in his turn to the Palace of the Signory to account for his actions. This time, instead of obeying, like his rival, he appeared in full armour, surrounded by his armed partisans; but his attack on the Signory was frustrated, the people were tired of his government, and the new Signory sent him into exile, while Cosimo returned to Florence amidst the jubilations of his many friends.

As he had borne his reverses with courage and cool judgment so now Cosimo used his success and good fortune with moderation; he returned to his counting house, to the management of his vast commercial concerns, to the superintendence and control of the noble buildings and great libraries with which he was enriching the city, and giving employment to thousands of its citizens. He left to his partisans the vengeance, which brought many of the Albizzi faction, as well as the son of his own judge, Bernardo Guadagni, to the scaffold.

But though the forms of Republican government survived, and were indeed studiously respected, the real "power behind the throne" was now that of the great Medici leader. But a few years after his return to Florence the city of Milan (1450) opened her gates to the successful Condottiere Francesco Sforza, receiving him with frantic rejoicing, with cries of "Prince" and "Duke;" and the Republic of Milan, the first of all the great north Italian Communes, ceased from that day to exist. The movement of the age seemed, indeed, to be fatal to liberty. "But," says Sismondi, "Milan would never have been conquered by Francesco Sforza, nor Lombardy have become the prey of an ambitious Captain of Adventure, had not the Republic of Florence, the very State which had caused to flourish art, ancient literature, philosophy and poetry, first changed her government.... and yet the name of Cosimo de' Medici is alone remembered by posterity, and the Albizzi are forgotten; because we are more attracted by the splendour which surrounds a great man than

by that power from which his greatness draws its source, or because we can yet read the praises of those who flattered and courted the first of the Medici Princes — of Ambrogio Traversari, of Poggio Bracciolini, of Flavio Biondo, of Gianozzo Manetti and Leonardo Aretino — who had lived in his intimacy, were fed by his bounty, and dedicated to him the writings which, in a large measure, contributed to the recovery of letters : but the deserving Government, under which all these great men were born and grew up, with amongst their number even Cosimo himself, had no one to celebrate its achievements, because it was struck down at the very moment when these writers had just reached their most creative period, and because gratitude, even among famous authors, does not often survive a political benefactor.”

But the great author of “The Italian Republics,” though he holds always the brief for civic liberty, can yet appreciate the remarkable qualities of Cosimo.

This Florentine merchant, who at no period of his splendid career ever abandoned his family business, whose vast riches gave life to the industries of his epoch, this merchant was at the same time undoubtedly one of the shrewdest politicians of his age, was a man too of the most refined taste in the arts, of considerable erudition in literature, of a just and profound judgment in philosophy, — which last field of thought owed much of its recovery to his care.

We have now traced in some measure the story of Florence up to the point when the new power of the Medici had become dominant within the city. We have seen how the Guelfic oligarchy, which had come into power in 1382, had raised to the highest point the external power and the internal resources of the Republic, how her frontiers had been enlarged, Pisa, Arezzo and Cortona brought under her sway, till the half at least of Tuscany was subject to the City of the Lily ; how within her borders trade and agriculture flourished ; how the accumulated riches of the State or individuals were spent not on vain display, but on noble buildings, on the works in sculpture and paintings of her native masters — such as were

Ghiberti, Donatello, Verrocchio, the Pollajuoli, Masaccio, Uccello and Fra Lippo, — on the recovery and elucidation of the classic texts by such scholars as Colluccio, Salutato, the chancellor of the Republic, as Niccolo de' Niccoli, Leonardo Bruni, Carlo Marsuppini or Gianozzo Manetti, — in one word, we may say, on the pursuit of the highest intellectual and artistic culture.

At this same time we have noted that a succession of statesmen, chosen from the great houses whom the new order of things had brought into prominence, ruled Florence during this period with Republican integrity, even while keeping the chief power of the State within the hands of their own class.

The name of Maso degli Albizzi came to our notice among the first and greatest of these leaders of the Florentine Republic, and his house remained dominant during the whole period we have just left behind us.

We are reminded here of Niccolo Macchiavelli's shrewd criticism in the prelude to his History of Florence : — “First of all the nobles of Florence took sides against each other, then next the nobles and the people (*il popolo*) and finally the people and the lowest classes (*la plebe*); and many a time it took place that the party among these which remained the victor itself split up again into two opposing camps.” We have here the whole course of Florentine political development, during the two centuries which preceded 1450, summarised into a sentence : just as in the earlier days the people had divided itself from the nobles, so now the people, after many years of successful rule, divided again and formed two camps, those of the great houses, the new aristocracy, the *nobili popolani* who had grown up out of the people themselves, and the *plebe*, the plebeians who were excluded from the government. It was at the head of this latter party that the Medici placed themselves : the first source of their power lay in the legitimate aspirations of their fellow citizens, over whom the prestige of their family position and their wealth gave them a preponderating influence, while they belonged themselves — though as a later addition — to the ruling oligarchy of the *nobili popolani*.

We have traced already the course of events which led up to the political crisis of 1434, which marks the date of the final victory of Cosimo di Medici over his enemies, and the fall and immediate proscription of the great house of the Albizzi. "Three members of this family"—says Dumas in his brilliant little study of the Medici—"Maso degli Albizzi, Nicholas d'Uzzano and Rinaldo degli Albizzi had during the period of fifty-three years succeeded to the power without any one of them having ever ceased to be simple citizens. Against their calm cool political judgment, against their hereditary political integrity, their firm and enduring patriotism all the bribes and scheming of Gian Galeazzo of Milan, the aggressions of the King of Naples, the attempts of Filippo Maria Visconti had equally failed. When they were driven from the city, like Pompey and Cato of old by the movement of the people, at Florence (as then at Rome) that movement brought back within itself the future tyrants of the country. It is true that the return of Cosimo from exile meant the triumph of the democracy over the aristocracy; but the victor was himself, by his family position and his immense means, too far above his supporters to consider them for very long, I do not say as his equals, but even as his fellow-citizens."

Cosimo gave indeed for the moment no sign of his latent ambitions, no hint which might alarm too much the Republican susceptibilities of his supporters; he returned to the management of his vast commercial interests, the splendid buildings with which he was enriching the city or raising for his pleasure at Careggi or Caffagiolo or Trebbio without her walls, the libraries which he was forming, the scholars and artists whom he was protecting.

But his whole aim, even perhaps in this very munificence, was to create a party bound to himself and his house by the closest pecuniary obligations, devoted to the Medici by interest or necessity—"âmes damnées" upon whose vote, and, if necessary, upon whose weapons he could count.

He had entered upon his power through a *Balia*, which was itself an instrument of tyranny, and, as such, justly condemned later by Savona-

BRONZE PORTRAIT BUST OF A GENTLEMAN.

By DONATO DI BETTO BARDI, called DONATELLO.

(National Museum, Florence)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



rola : but as Cosimo had been sent into exile through one *Balia* he cannot be blamed for profiting by another by return. This "Parliament" (*Parlamento*) meant the gathering of the citizens of Florence in the old Piazza of the Signory. "When the Signory," says Segni, "has taken its place to address the meeting the Piazza is guarded by armed men, and then the people are asked whether they wish to give absolute power (*Balia*) and authority to the citizens named, for their good. When the answer, yes, prompted partly by inclination and partly by compulsion, is returned, the Signory immediately retires into the Palace. This is all that is meant by this Parlamento, which thus gives away the full power of effecting a change in the State."

No wonder that the proverb ran—"*Chi disse Parlamento disse Guastamento* (who says Parliament spells ruin to the State);" but for the moment Cosimo used with the greatest moderation the power which had thus come into his hands. He left to his followers to execute vengeance on his enemies, to drag Antonio Guadagni to the scaffold and to bring back Barbadori from Venice to meet the same doom : though his influence may be traced in the proscriptions which followed, and which drove such a distinguished citizen as Palla Strozzi into life-long exile, during the period which immediately followed upon his return Cosimo was careful to adhere to Republican forms. "The party of Cosimo di Medici," says Macchiavelli in his *Istorie Fiorentine* "remained the victor in the year 1434; but, since the vanquished party was still strong and full of powerful men, the victors remained for a time united and moderate (*umana*), so much so that no political mistake can be recorded of them, nor any sinister action which could win the people's hatred. So much was this the case that whenever that party was pressed by the people to be allowed to resume their authority it was always found ready and willing to hand over to the said people's leaders all that *Balia* and power which they desired; and so it happened that between the years 1434 and 1455, which makes up twenty-one years, no less than six times did the Council" (of the people) "reassert the authority of the *Balia* in the ordinary legal manner."

This subtle political observer, who was for fifteen years Secretary of the Republic, goes on to analyse very closely and carefully Cosimo's political methods. "He knew," says Macchiavelli, "how to so arrange matters that the *borse*" (in which were placed the names of those competent for election to any magistracy, to be subsequently drawn by lot) "were always filled with the names of its own friends, so that in this way he ran no risk whatever, and could at any time resume his control at his own convenience. At the same time, as the city continued to elect its magistrates by lot, it seemed to the mass of the citizens, that they had recovered their liberty, and that the magistrates administered the laws not according to the will of those in power, but according to their own good judgment; and this all the more so that here they saw the friends of one great person, here that of another to be beaten at law and lose his case.... and whenever there arose any question at issue which interested the people he (Cosimo) was the first to give it a favourable hearing."

But this man, who went forth through the streets of Florence dressed as a simple citizen, whose sound advice and even whose purse was open to all who deserved it, knew that he held within his hands the real essentials of power. "Though he alone in Florence was the leader (*principe*) and chief, yet such was his prudence and moderation that he never exceeded the modest behaviour of a citizen (*che mai la civil modestia non trapasso*) : seeing that in his converse with others, in his retinue, in his manner of riding forth, and indeed in his whole manner of life and his domestic relations he was always like to any other modest citizen (*a qualunque modesto cittadino*); and this because he recognised that excessive display, which is being constantly noted and commented on, brings about more actual jealousy and hatred than the real elements of power which are covered by a simple and seemly demeanour."

At the same time his public munificence was superb, and by giving out a vast amount of remunerative employment endeared him yet farther to his fellow citizens. I have alluded to his villas at Careggi and Caffaggiuolo. To the Florentine citizen of substance his "villa" without the city

was his greatest joy and pride, besides supplying his household with many necessaries of life ; and here Cosimo was only indulging a luxury which was as essential to his family position as was the noble Palace, the Palazzo Medici in the Via Larga (now Palazzo Riccardi in the Via Cavour), within the city which still claims our admiration. “Of his private houses”—says Macchiavelli—“there was one within the city of that 'substance (*essere*) which was befitting to so great a citizen; and four without, at Careggi, at Fiesole, at Caffaggiuolo, and at Trebbio, all of these palaces not so much of private citizens as of princes.” Add to these the magnificent public buildings which on all sides rose at his command, and busied an army of workers. At Venice, where he had spent his years of exile, Cosimo founded, as a token of his gratitude, a public library in the Convent of San Giorgio. In Florence the Convent of San Marco now rose, and contained in its Library Niccolo de' Niccoli's famous collection of manuscripts, to which I shall allude later; and the Church of S. Lorenzo, the monastery of Santa Verdiana, on the Fiesole heights San Girolaomo and the Badia, besides private Chapels and altars in Santa Croce, in the Church of the Servi, in S. Maria degli Angioli and in San Miniato — all bore witness to his princely generosity. Yet though he spent so much on the building of temples and on alms “he was wont sometimes to lament to his friends that he had never been able to spend so much in God's honour as to find him a debtor in his books.”

Luca Landucci, a Florentine apothecary of this time, in his interesting and valuable “Diary” which takes its commencement from the 15th of October, 1450 — “on which day I, Luca d'Antonio di Luca Landucci, citizen of Florence and of about fourteen years of age, went to school with a master who was called Calandro, and, God be thanked, began to learn” — adds, — “And in these times was commenced the lantern of the Cupola of Santa Maria di Fiore, and the palace of Cosimo de' Medici, and San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito, and the Abbey (Badia) as you go towards Fiesole” — which last I take to refer to what is now called S. Domenico.

Landucci is especially valuable to our study because he gives us the impression of contemporary events as they appeared to a respectable level-headed Florentine citizen, of what we might now call the lower middle class. At the same time his rough notes are often far more vivid, more real than the long periods, modelled upon the Latin classics, of the professed historians, such as Guicciardini, Segni, Nardi, and others. We really seem to see the old Piazza of the Signory, seething with the angry crowd of burghers like swarming bees. We hear their hoarse cries of "Popolo e Libertà;" we follow the frightful executions which were the sequel to the ineffectual conspiracy of the Pazzi, and note a thrill of horror even in the mind of the home-keeping apothecary; and at this earlier date, among the illustrious men of his time we note the overpowering impression created on his mind by "Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici, who was called by all the world "the Great merchant" (*el gran mercante*), and whose good opinion and advice was valued by all. So that no greater compliment could be paid anyone than to say—"You seem to be a Cosimo de' Medici (*E' ti par essere Cosimo de' Medici*). That was as much as to say, that no greater or richer or more famous man could be found."

If we are to trace the culture of the "Humanities" at Florence we must go back at least as far as Coluccio de' Salutati, who draws his literary inspiration from Petrarch and Boccaccio. The date of Boccaccio's death (1375) marks the moment when Salutati abandoned his study of Dante and Petrarch for the grave duties of Chancellor of the Florentine Republic; but he had before this been the disciple at Florence of Marsigli, from whom our enquiry might even better take its commencement.

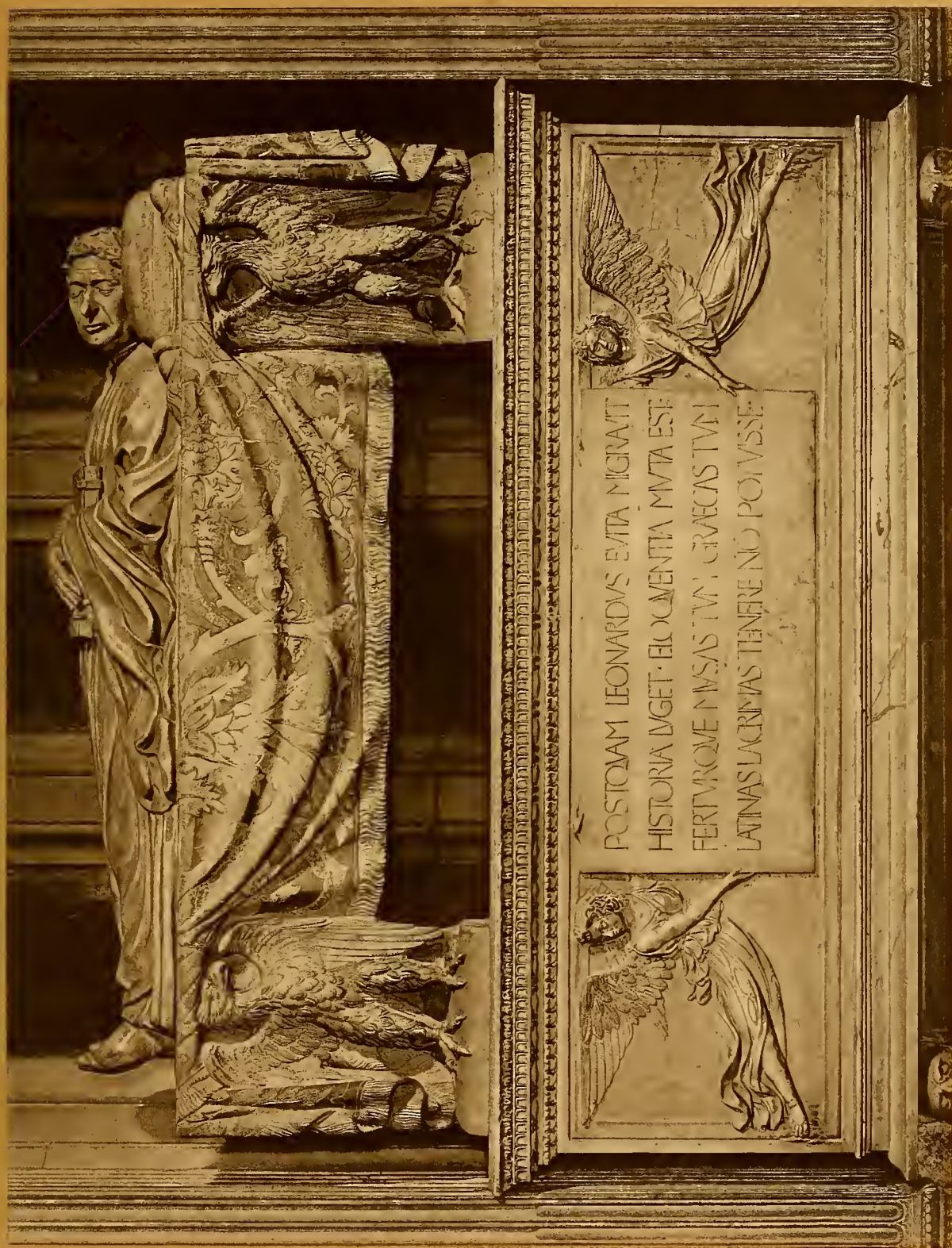
Born of a noble and ancient Florentine family Luigi Marsigli entered early in life into the monastic order of the Augustinians. He had been inspired by the counsel and friendship of Petrarch, "whose presence alone," he said, "sufficed to guide us to the path of virtue—whose words impressed themselves indelibly upon my mind;" and around him in his later life, within the convent of S. Spirito at Florence, there came to form itself a little chosen circle of the most brilliant scholars within

MONUMENT OF LEONARDO BRUNI.

By BERNARDO ROSSELLINO.

(*Church of Santa Croce, Florence.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



POSTQVAM LEONARDVS EVITA MIGRAVIT
HISTORIA DVGET. HIC CVM EVITA MVA ESTE
FERTVROVE NVSAS TVN GRVCAS TVNI
LATINAS LACRIMAS TENERE NIO POIVSSE

that keenly intellectual city. Coluccio de' Salutati was among these — now become the Chancellor of the Republic — Niccolo de' Niccoli, to whom we shall refer later, Roberto de' Rossi and Gianozzo Manetti : Poggio noted later, in his oration upon Niccolo, that the house of Marsigli was the resort of the best and noblest burghers of the city, who came thither to him “as to some oracle of more than human wisdom,” while an unknown novelist of the time thanks God “for his mercy in letting him hear the sweet eloquence of Marsigli (*la soave eloquenza di Marsigli*).” The convent of San Spirito, which already contained Boccaccio's library, became thus an intellectual centre, where the old monk was wont to illustrate his discourses upon theology or morals with long quotations from the Latin classics — from Cicero, Virgil and Seneca — and with a certain individual vein of pleasant irony : the theme chosen for each discussion was posted on the wall of the debating room, and a school of thinkers was being formed whence emerged some of the greatest Florentine scholars of the coming age. When Marsigli died (1394) the city of Florence placed his marble monument within S. Maria del Fiore, where later Marsilio Ficino was to follow him.

I have already spoken of Coluccio de' Salutati; but great though his importance both in Florentine politics and letters — in the former especially by the national spirit which he endeavoured to rouse throughout Italy, and by which he brought upon his own city the Papal interdict, in the latter more closely as a link between Petrarch and the later Humanists — we come yet nearer to our period in the delightful personality of Niccolo de' Niccoli. It was the age of discovery of the Past, when Petrarch, on viewing a convent, wondered what literary treasures it might contain; when Boccaccio had ransacked the dusty and mutilated *Codices* preserved by the Benedictines at Monte Cassino, when Poggio — with two disciples of the Greek Crisoloras, the jurisconsult Bartolommeo da Montepulciano and Agapito Cenci — had recovered from the Convent of S. Gall a dust-covered, but complete, copy of the *Institutes of Quintilian*, besides the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus, the *Silvae* of Statius, and several of Cicero's *Orations*.

The enthusiasm which these successive "finds" awakened in the world of culture—and which I have described in an earlier work of mine which touches on this movement — finds an inspiring illustration in the person of Niccolo de' Niccoli.

We have seen him already among the little circle which surrounded Marsigli within S. Spirito; he had copied with his own hand many of Poggio's discoveries at Constance, — as for instance that damaged MS. of Ammianus Marcellinus which may have come from the monastery of Fulda, and which Niccolo in 1423 copied in his own clear hand, since a less learned copyist must have failed in the task. He, too, in conjunction with Salutati and Palla degli Strozzi, had at an earlier date (1396) brought to Florence the Byzantine Greek, Manuel Chrysoloras, at whose lectures, crowded by the studious youth of Florence—among whom were Leonardo Bruni, Gianozzo Manetti, Carlo Marsuppini, and Ambrogio Traversari, men who became later the ripest scholars of their age—Niccolo himself was often present, though, like his friend Salutati, he never acquired a profound knowledge of the Greek tongue.

But of Latin he was a master, and Leonardo Bruni, sending him his own *Life of Cicero*, calls him "the Censor of the Latin tongue." What a delightful picture Symonds has transcribed from Vespasiano's account of the old scholar. "First of all he was of a most fair presence; lively, for a smile was ever on his lips; and very pleasant in his talk. He wore clothes of the fairest crimson cloth, down to the ground. He never married, in order that he might not be impeded in his studies. A housekeeper provided for his daily needs. He was above all men the most cleanly in eating, as also in all other things. When he sat at table he ate from fair antique vases, and, in like manner, all his table was covered with porcelain and other vessels of great beauty. The cup from which he drank was of crystal, or of some other precious stone. He always willed that the napkins set before him should be of the whitest, as well as all the linen. To see him at table—a perfect model of the men of old—was of a truth a charming sight."

The house where he lived, adds the same writer, was worthy of his refined taste and cultivated judgment; for he had formed a Museum of antiquities—"and Niccolo, having friends everywhere, any one who wished to do him a pleasure would send him marble statues or antique vases, carvings, inscriptions, pictures from the hands of distinguished masters and mosaic tablets."

There was no egotism in the old man's generous devotion to learning. His house was open to every sincere student, his priceless books (copied often in his own fair clear hand) at the disposal of those who wished to make use of them: so much so that at his death two hundred volumes were lacking to his library, having been lent and not returned,—though Niccolo himself was sometimes, it seems, an offender, since we find Poggio complaining to him that his "Lucretius" had been kept for twelve years (from 1417 to 1429). But the man was himself an inspiration to the highest culture, and no one could approach him without, it seems, being influenced by the magnetism of his personality. "Every time that I receive any of thy letters"—writes Leonardo Bruni to our Niccolo—"I feel my enthusiasm for study revived;" and we read elsewhere that he not only received students and strangers but conversed with sculptors and painters, discussing their inventions as freely as he criticized the essays of the scholars. "It is probable that the classicism of Brunelleschi and Donatello, both of whom were among his intimate friends, may be due, in part at least, to his discourses on the manner of the ancients."

Such a man could not long escape the notice of Cosimo de' Medici; and we find, in fact, that Niccolo owed much to that magnificent patron of all that was best in art and letters. We gather from Poggio's letters that Niccolo was once at Rome in Cosimo's company; and when his whole fortune had been lavished on procuring manuscripts of the ancients the resources of the Medici bank were placed at his disposal, and Cosimo, with princely generosity, gave orders to his cashiers that the old scholar's drafts were to be honoured, whenever presented.

He treated the scholar Tommaso Parentucelli, in the same liberal man-

ner; and both these men were of immense service to him in forming the great libraries with which he enriched Florence. When Niccolo died his manuscripts in part formed the nucleus of the Library of S. Marco, and Tommaso, at Cosimo's request, made the catalogue of these, and then added those works which were needed to complete the collection. Later, when the poor scholar assumed the Papal tiara, with the title of Nicholas V., he did not forget his Florentine patron, but made Cosimo his banker; the money he had received he was thus able to repay more than tenfold.

Niccolo himself was in close correspondence with all the world of scholars, and had tidings of every discovery of manuscripts, of every fresh move in the advancement of learning: it is curious that he never published any work of his own, but it seems (from what Æneas Silvius, later Pope Pius II., tells us) that his taste was too critical to be ever satisfied with his own achievements—even among his beloved ancients only Plato, Virgil, Horace and S. Jerome meeting his entire approval; and Poggio confirms this in a letter to Ambrogio Traversari, where he says that nothing could please Niccolo that was not polished to a nicety — “*Niccoli, cui nihil nisi elimatum placet.*”

At the same time Niccolo exacted from others—from other scholars especially—the greatest attention and respect, and was apt to fly into violent tempers when he considered that his dignity was in any way affected. Hence his fierce quarrels with Filelfo and Aurispa, with Guarino of Verona, even with the Byzantine Chrysoloras, whom we have seen that he had himself invited to Florence to further the original study of Greek. Hence, too, his terrible battle of words with Leonardo Bruni—though it would seem that not merely scholarship was here in question, but that the old saying of *Cherchez la femme* might be applied. For it appears that Niccolo's relations disapproved of the position in his bachelor establishment of his housekeeper, and meeting this Benvenuta in the street had covered her with reproach.

Bruni was injudicious enough to approve their action, and himself to describe the lady as quite a common cook; and this remark of his reached

MONUMENT OF THE CARDINAL OF PORTUGAL.

By ANTONIO ROSSELLINO.

(*Basilica of S. Miniato al Monte, Florence.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



REGIA STIRPS·IACOBVS NOMEN·LV·SITANA PROPAGO
INSIGNIS FORMAE·SVMMA·PVDICITIA·
CARDINEVS·TITIVS·N·GR·N·NITOR·OPTIMA·ITA
VEARE·M·M·MOR·I·VENE·R·P·VIT

Niccolo's ears. "Hence arose implacable anger." Bruni published a furious invective against his old friend in the shape of his *Oratio in nebulonem maledicum* (Anglice, "Speech against a foulmouthed scamp"); and Niccolo though he declined to be drawn into a correspondence, replied among his own circle by biting sarcasms.

These literary quarrels were, however, quite in the fashion of the day, and I have given some account of them already in another work. "The Humanists were open to the charges brought against them of intense self-conceit (Battista Mantovano says they fancy themselves children of Apollo, and walk with affected solemnity) of extreme profligacy (Poggio's works may be typical of the frightful indecency, combined with gross personal abuse, in which they could on occasion indulge), and lastly of doctrinal heresy."

In this case, however, Poggio Bracciolini, a friend of both parties, who was then in London, tried vainly, both from thence and for many successive years, to restore peace between the combatants; and Pope Eugenius IV., when he came to Florence, found his mediation equally unavailing. Finally the learned Venetian Francesco Barbaro healed at least (apparently) the breach, and earned by so doing Poggio's warm encomium; but even so the old friendship between the two scholars never resumed its former intimate footing.

Yet Niccolo had many and lasting friends, who could make allowance for his defects of temper by his many sterling qualities: among these were the scholars Ambrogio Traversari, Carlo Marsuppini, and Poggio himself, who says, in one letter to Niccolo—"I tell thee that I alone, even if all others were to desert thee, will remain faithful (*Unum dico, etsi alii omnes deseruerunt, me in fide mansurum*), nor will I be wanting to thee and thy renown;" and who showed his sincerity by the tears which he shed at his friend's death, by the words which he spoke in his grief to Marsuppini, and the funeral oration which he pronounced over Niccolo, and which still survives.

The death of Niccolo (February 4, 1437) was indeed a loss to Renaissance

culture; by his testament he took thought for the future of his beloved books, his eight hundred manuscripts valued at six thousand golden florins, of which Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici, Ambrogio Traversari, Leonardo Bruni, Carlo Marsuppini, Poggio Bracciolini, Gianozzo Manetti, and others were appointed trustees. The debts of his estate were fully discharged by Cosimo, and we have seen that he placed a part of Niccolo's manuscripts within his newly built Library of S. Marco,—keeping the remainder for his own collection which became developed later into the *Libreria Laurenziana*, and giving a few copies to friends. I have dwelt at some length on the figure of Niccolo de' Niccoli because he is very typical of the movement of which Florence was a centre and an intellectual focus: and it is worth noting here how Poggio,—despite the roving life which his position as Papal Secretary after entailed,—found, not in Rome or any other centre, but in Florence alone the real home of the intellectual life of his age. “True it is,” says Burckhardt, “that in our days men are wont to proclaim aloud the advantages of culture in general, and of the study of the classics in particular. But nowhere, and among no people, shall we find such an absolutely enthusiastic devotion to these aims, such a conviction that these are the first and most important concerns of life, and all this carried to such a high level as among the Florentines of the fifteenth and of a part also of the sixteenth centuries.”

I feel even tempted, ere we leave our friend Niccolo, to give one story out of Vespasiano, which exactly illustrates both his personal influence, and the movement of his age in this direction.

“Messer Piero de' Pazzi, a son of Messer Andrea, being a youth most fair to look upon and much given to the pleasures, of the world, gave no thought to letters, since his father was a merchant, and like those who have no knowledge of such things did not esteem them, or wish his son to be busied with them.....”

“When Niccolo Niccoli,—who was another Socrates and another Cato for his continence and virtue—was in Florence, as one day Messer Piero was passing, although he had never spoken to him before, as he passed the

Palace of the Podestà, seeing him to be a youth of such fair appearance, Niccolo called to him to come near. And, since Niccolo was a man of the highest reputation, he came to him at once. When he had come near Niccolo looked at him, and asked him whose son he was? He replied—the son of Messer Andrea de' Pazzi. He asked of him next, “how he spent his time?” He replied, even as youths are wont to do : “I try to have a good time (*attendo a darmi buon tempo*).”

Niccolo said to him : “Since you are the son of such a father as yours and yourself of such good appearance it is a shame that you do not set yourself to learn the Latin tongue — the which would be a great ornament to your life; and if you do not learn it you will be held of no account. When once the flower of your youth is passed you will find yourself without any real acquirements (*virtù ignuna*). Messer Piero, hearing these words of Niccolo, at once appreciated them, and recognized that he had spoken the truth.... Deserting the countless distractions and pleasures to which he had been inclined, he now devoted himself entirely to letters, and day and night made them his first concern; so that in no long time Messer Piero, being very quick of apprehension, and having a most learned teacher” (a certain Pontano, “very skilled in Greek and Latin,” had been recommended to him by Niccolo), “he soon began to have a good knowledge of Latin letters, from which he acquired very great honour and reputation.... He learned the *Æneid* of Virgil by heart, and many speeches from Livy in prose, and was wont to recite them by way of exercise and amusement, as he journeyed to and fro from a certain property which he had, which property was called Trebbio.”

Leonardo Bruni occupied a position fully equal to that of Niccolo himself in the world of letters. Born of humble parents at Arezzo he was obliged to devote himself to legal studies for a livelihood; but the arrival of Chrysoloras in Florence confirmed the overpowering attraction towards the new culture, which had in his earlier years been first excited by a portrait of Petrarch in his bedroom—in *ipso cubiculo picta Francisci Petrarce imago*.

In 1405 the influence of his master Salutati, and his friend Poggio, obtained for him the post of Apostolic Secretary; but it was not till 1427, when he succeeded Salutati as Secretary of State to Florence, that he finally obtained the home and the position that his soul desired—that he was able to place his legal acquirements and his finished Latinity at the service of the Republic.

For Leonardo was a Latinist of the first order. He himself was persuaded that he was destined to reform the Latin in use; his letters, both private and public, were held to be models of elegance, and his public speeches considered to rival the eloquence of Pericles,—although it was well known that these last were carefully prepared, and that otherwise he was often at a loss for words.

It is a fascinating picture which Vespasiano draws of him in his later life at Florence. In his earlier years he had been often wont to be seen among his friends of an evening in the Loggia dei Pisani, or in the book-sellers' shops in the great Piazza, just where we have noted that Niccolo had been standing when young Piero de' Pazzi sauntered by—a favourite *rendez-vous*, this, of the learned and *bels esprits* of the time.

But as years and honours grew upon him he became more reserved and reticent, lived much to himself in his own house or his public office; and when he went forth into the city, attended by admiring scholars, wrapped in his long mantle of crimson, he moved with a certain grave dignity, conscious of his great place in the world of letters and the councils of the Republic—*unus inter doctissimos..... lento pede et gravi passu adveniens*.

Such a grave figure we may imagine him as are those robed burghers who crowd into Ghirlandajo's frescoes of the Choir of S. M. Novella—many of whom are actual portraits of later scholars and Humanists,—or as that Florentine donor who kneels, draped in his crimson mantle, before the Trinity, in Masaccio's fresco within the same church.

The Florentines themselves regarded Leonardo Bruni with the greatest pride and veneration, although his more reserved character contrasted

A BATTLE SCENE.
From the Painting by PAOLO DONI, called PAOLO UCCELLO.
(*Musée du Louvre, Paris.*)
Photo Alinari. Florence.



with the genial personality of Niccolo; but, in contrast again to this latter, his literary output was astonishing in its extent and solidity. And this was outside of his public life, in which he took a keen interest, having been a member of the Council of Ten, a Prior of the City, and Ambassador to Pope Martin V. for the Republic, of which too throughout his later life we have seen that he was Secretary of State. Yet he found time among these public engagements to write in Italian the lives of Dante and Petrarch, and in Latin the lives of Cicero and Aristotle,—while his work among the classic texts is stupendous! He translated into Latin the *Ethics*, *Economics* and *Politics* of Aristotle, dedicating at first the latter of these works to the English Duke of Worcester, though he subsequently transferred this honour to Pope Eugenius IV. From Plato he translated the *Phædo*, *Crito*, *Apology*, *Phædrus* and *Gorgias*; from Plutarch six of the *Lives*, and from Demosthenes two *Orations*.

But perhaps the work which most endeared him to his fellow-citizens was his Latin *History of Florence*, which he completed down to the year 1404. Symonds remarks very truly of this work : “Both Leonardo and Poggio were led astray by the false taste of the earlier Renaissance. Their admiration for Livy and the pedantic proprieties of a labored Latinism made them pay more attention to rhetoric than to the substance of their work. Leonardo Bruni, for example, complains in the preface of his history that it is impossible to accommodate the rude names of his personages to a polished style. We meet with frigid imitations and bombastic generalities, where concise details and graphic touches would have been acceptable.” Though this is critically true, yet the work of Leonardo belonged to the spirit of the time, and was appreciated as such. When the great Humanist and Secretary of State passed away from his busy life, in March of 1444, and the Priors of the Republic decreed him a public funeral, his body was draped in dark silk; and upon his breast, as he was carried in state through the city to S. Croce, was placed his *History of Florence*, — “as the most precious gift that her Secretary had bestowed on the Republic.”

It was the scholar Gianozzo Manetti, himself a member of the Council of Ten, who pronounced his funeral oration, at whose conclusion, drawing near to the dead man, he said : — “ And now we turn to thee, effulgent star of Latinity, and in eternal witness of thy marvellous learning and thy incomparable eloquence, and for an example both for those who live now and for all succeeding ages, in conformity with the decree of our City’s Council, we crown thy brow with the laurel wreath which is thy desert! ”

As he spoke these words before the representatives of the Republic, with many ambassadors and members of the Papal Curia and the people of Florence, with a trembling hand he placed the wreath upon the great scholar’s brow : the body was interred within S. Croce, and Bernardo Rossellino wrought an exquisite monument in marble, which still remains as an example of the purest Renaissance art. The epitaph on this monument was composed by Carlo Marsuppini, who succeeded Leonardo as Secretary of the Florentine Republic.

Messer Carlo was generally considered by his contemporaries as Leonardo’s inferior in prose writing, but as surpassing him in verse. His close connection with the *Studio Fiorentino* is to be noted. In this *Studio* the efforts of Boccaccio had created a chair of Greek literature, which had been first filled by Leontius Pilatus. Later we have seen the Greek Chrysoloras to have taught there, till the terrible pestilence of 1400 had driven him from Florence, with most of his pupils. But from 1414, with the assistance of Niccola d’Uzzano and Palla Strozzi, the *Studio* recovered, and more than recovered, its old position. Guarino, a direct disciple of Chrysoloras who had lived with him in Byzantium, filled the chair of Greek, till (in an ill-advised moment) he thought fit to publish a criticism of Niccolo de’ Niccoli’s *Ortografia*; the fiery little Humanist turned on his old friend, and practically drove him out of Florence.

The chair was then vacant for ten years, till the famous Aurispa landed at Venice with his chests full of Greek books. He lost no time in informing Cosimo de’ Medici that he had brought three hundred of these works with

him to Bologna; and in 1424 he was established at Florence in the chair of Greek at the *Studio*. A no less famous Greek scholar, Francesco Filelfo, followed him there; but when this latter got into the bad graces of the Medici in 1434 the chair was offered to Carlo Marsuppini. Filelfo saw the lecture-room of his brilliant young rival filled with pupils. He even asserted that the Medici had employed against his life the dagger of a hired assassin, — one Filippo, who had attacked him on his way to the *Studio*; and his joy when a shuffle of the political cards had sent Cosimo into exile may be more easily imagined than described!

The literary quarrels of this period have already come under our notice, and this one of Filelfo with the Medici was one of the most famous. His *Liber de Exilio*, in which he compares Lorenzo de' Medici to a bull — *Nonne, cum loquitur, mugit?* ("Does he not bellow, whenever he tries to speak?") Such is his criticism of the vocal powers of the Magnificent! — and Cosimo to a fox was published in 1437. Poggio sent these Medici a copy, and then took up the cudgels on their behalf.

To Poggio's invectives Filelfo replied with satires. Neither the private character of each other nor that of their immediate ancestors were spared by the opponents; and, in fact, the charges made are so violent and so incredibly indecent that they defeat their own object, and defy belief!

But it is a fact worth noting that, even in the midst of his exile and polemics, Filelfo's heart really yearned for Florence — that centre of culture and intellectual life. As an old man he sought to make peace with these Medici, of whom he had once said — "Let Cosimo use against me his dagger and his poison: my genius and my pen are sufficient weapons for me against him!" At the age of eighty-three he was at length recalled to resume his lectures in the *Studio*: but the journey proved too much for the old man, and he arrived only to find his last rest within the city of his love and bitter hatreds.

Carlo Marsuppini, even after he had taken Leonardo's place as Secretary of State to the Republic, continued — *cum magna dignitate, magnoque salario* — his lectures upon the Greek language at the *Studio*. His repu-

tation became no less great than that of Bruni, and when he died he was buried, like his predecessor, in Santa Croce, his funeral oration being pronounced by Matteo Palmieri, his disciple, who placed upon his brow the wreath of laurel.

His tomb faces that of Leonardo Bruni, within the church where so many great Florentines had been laid to rest, and is wrought in marble by Desiderio da Settignano; and these tombs remind us that this period of intense intellectual activity at Florence was also a period of immense progress in the plastic arts, of great delicacy and refinement in sculpture, of great (or even greater) technical development in painting. Of the former these two monuments by Rossellino and Desiderio may serve as an example. The tomb of Leonardo Bruni by Bernardo Rossellino in the right aisle of Santa Croce at Florence bears upon its sarcophagus, upheld by winged angels, the inscription—

*Postquam Leonardus e vita migravit. Historia luget.
Eloquentia muta est. Ferturque Musas tum Graecas tum
Latinas lacrimas tenere non potuisse.*

Above this the dead scholar lies in his last sleep, upon a bier covered with rich drapery, with eagles for its supporters. His face is turned slightly towards us : he is robed in his long citizen's mantle, the book of his Florentine History is on his breast — the artist has depicted him just as he was borne to his last rest in this church.

In the beautiful Renaissance canopy above him the Virgin and Child Jesus appear in a roundel, with angels at either side : and to be noted too is the marble frieze of “putti,” bearing wreaths beneath the sarcophagus. The whole monument is a masterpiece of earlier Renaissance sculpture : but the comparison suggests itself between this and the monument of Pope John XXIII. (d. 1419) in marble and bronze within the Florence Baptistery. Here Donatello and Michelozzo working together produced a design which Bernardo has obviously followed in its main lines of construction.

Pope John XXIII., *quondam Papa*, as says the legend here, appears in bronze lying upon a bier above the sarcophagus, beneath which are carved

BRONZE GATE OF THE BAPTISTERY.

By LORENZO Ghiberti.

(*The Baptistery, Florence.*)

Photo Alinari. Florence.



three figures (the Christian virtues?). Above, as in Bruni's tomb, appear the Virgin and Child : and the nude figures of children upon the sarcophagus are worthy of Donatello himself. There seems as distinct a sequence between this earlier monument in the Baptistery and that of Bruni, as between this latter and the tomb which faces it in S. Croce of Carlo Marsuppini.

The monument of Messer Carlo is later in style and even richer in treatment, but no less beautiful. Here the sarcophagus is extremely ornate in design, and its legend bids the passer-by to pause before this marble tomb of him whose genius the world itself was not great enough to contain !

... *Karolus ætatis gloria magna suæ*
Ausonix & Graix crimes solvite necesse
Occidit heu vestri fama decusque chori.

As in Leonardo's monument so here too the great scholar lies on a bier above the sarcophagus, robed, and with his book clasped to his breast. His face is of extraordinary refinement and beauty : above the lofty brow we see the wreath of laurel. Naked boy angels, life-size and erect, support shields (with the scholar's arms?) on either side of the sarcophagus ; and older draped youths are on either side of the arch, within which (as in Leonardo's tomb) we see Madonna and the Child in a roundel, with angels beside them. The whole is, as a work of art, far richer and perhaps even more beautiful than the tomb of Leonardo : but, just as the inscription is too diffuse, too exaggerated in its laudation, so too this masterpiece of Desiderio's art, — “ the best example,” said Perkins, “ of his delicate captivating manner,” — seems to lack that fine reserve of the earlier scholar's monument.

This monument by Bernardo Rossellino (its date 1444) may be compared with Antonio Rossellino's monument of the Cardinal of Portugal within San Miniato. “The sublimity of the slumber that is death has never,” said Symonds — “been more nobly and feelingly portrayed than in the supine figure and sleeping features of this most beautiful young man, who lies, watched by angels, beneath a heavily curtained canopy.” And he adds, “ While contemplating this monument of the young Cardinal we feel

that the Italians of that age understood sepulchral sculpture far better than their immediate successors." We may note indeed the first hint of the change — which became far more marked later — in these tombs of the great Humanists at Santa Croce; and it is to be noticed that Luca Landucci, under the date 1458, after giving praise to Cosimo mentions next in order of fame — "Donatello the sculptor who made" (here he is wrong) "the tomb of Leonardo of Arezzo in Santa Croce; and Desiderio the sculptor who made the tomb of Messer Carlo of Arezzo, also in Santa Croce. Next came il Rossellino, a man small in size but great in his art of sculpture. He made the tomb of the Cardinal that is in San Miniato, in that chapel on the left-hand side." We see here that a contemporary picks out these three tombs as the most important work of this epoch: and as a matter of fact as noble monumental sculpture they have never been surpassed.

We have now to return to the circle of scholars at Florence under the Medicean patronage, and we come back to our more special subject in this Prologue in the person of Gianozzo Manetti, whom we have seen to have placed the wreath of laurel upon dead Leonardo Bruni's brow, and who is himself a typical example of the Florentine scholars of this period. Born of a noble family at Florence he was destined for commercial life, and at an early age took his place in the counting house. But he too was caught up by the dominant craving for knowledge; though he cannot be classed entirely as a Humanist, since theology remained through his life his especially subject of study. Instead of frequenting the *Studio Fiorentino*, where he might have met Niccolo de' Niccoli or Leonardo Bruni, he made use of the Convent of S. Spirito which was near his father's house, and where, since the impulse given by Marsigli, a sort of conventual college had been formed which was independent of the *Studio* and of the State. Here he gave his attention to Logic, to the Ethical Sciences, and followed the lectures of Maestro Girolamo of Naples upon the *Physics* of Aristotle and S. Augustine's *City of God*; at the same time he felt the need of acquiring Greek, and commenced to study the *Cyropaedia* of Xenophon and other works under the guidance of Ambrogio Traversari.

Ambrogio was the son of a simple rustic from Romagna, and at fourteen had been admitted into the convent of St. Maria degli Angioli without Florence. But the influence of Niccolo and the arrival of Chrysoloras in the city led his mind beyond the routine of conventual description. He mastered Greek and even arrived at a fair knowledge of Hebrew. "At a time when knowledge of Greek was still a rare title to distinction Ambrogio mastered the elements of the language and studied the Greek fathers in the original. His cell became the meeting-place of learned men, where Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici, the stately Bruni and the sombre Marsuppini joined with caustic Niccolo and lively Poggio in earnest conversation."

It was his promotion by Pope Eugenius IV. (October 26, 1431) to be General of the Camaldolese Order which brought him from the life of a peaceful student into the world of affairs, for which his training had scarcely fitted him. From this time both his life and indeed his character seem to alter. The cloistered student becomes a new S. Bernard, who impresses upon his Papal patron the need for Church reform, a courtier and man of the world, who holds within his hands the complex threads of ecclesiastical policy and the needs and ambitions of the religious orders; and, lastly, a dogmatic theologian of the first water, who was a leading figure at the Council of Basle, and at Ferrara and Florence gave his verdict (supported by copious extracts from the great Fathers) on such vexed questions as the doctrinal value of the *Filioque*.

But it was in the little circle of Humanists at Florence, in the company of Bruni, of Marsuppini, above all of Niccolo de' Niccoli, his intimate and life-long friend, that another side of Ambrogio's nature seemed to claim a place. What gives to his character a special point of interest in our study is the fact that with him the claims of Christian doctrine and antique culture struggle for mastery, and produce an internal contest which torments and distracts the poor scholar — and whose artistic counterpart we shall trace later in the work of Sandro Botticelli and other artists. That keen biting Florentine intellect of Niccolo did not take long to dis-

cover this weak point in his friend's armour, nor could his mordant sarcasm—whose edge Bruni and Guarino and Filelfo had felt—fail to take advantage of it.

He was wont to shake his head when Brother Ambrose harangued upon the vanity of worldly things—the *vitium vanitatis*—and to declare among his own circle that behind all this talk there lay a good deal of ambition, and perhaps the hope of a Cardinal's hat : while once he landed his friend upon the horns of a dilemma, whose issue must have afforded him some quiet amusement.

This was when, with Cosimo de' Medici's powerful support, he pressed Ambrogio to undertake the translation of the *Lives of Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius. All of the scholar in Brother Ambrose clamoured for the task, all the ambition which lurked beneath his monastic exterior urged him to seek to rival the Latinity of Bruni, yet all of the conscientious churchman condemned the handling of so pagan a theme ! In his perplexity and mental torment he appealed for advice to his friend Giustiniani, apparently with the hope at the back of his mind that this latter's advice would be to disregard his scruples. On the contrary this friend advised him to keep to the example of the Fathers of the Church, who never gave up their time to the writings of the Heathen. Yet, in spite of this advice Ambrogio commenced the work, which was duly finished, and as duly dedicated to Cosimo de' Medici. But with what inward groans and searchings of heart was it carried through, with what cries of — “ Would that I had never begun this work ! But once it is finished I will return with renewed ardour to the translation of the Holy Scriptures ! ”

To Niccolo himself Brother Ambrose was a devoted friend, and bore all the little Humanist's sarcasms and criticism of his mundane weaknesses and inconsistencies with good temper and unaffected devotion. On that tender point of the housekeeper Benvenuta (the rock on which we have seen Bruni's friendship to founder and split up) Traversari shewed the most admirable tact, and scarcely closes a letter to his friend without

DAVID.

By DONATO DI BETTO BARDI, called DONATELLO.

(National Museum, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



some allusion to this *fœmina fidelissima* (this most faithful of women), or to *fidelissima famula tua*.

There is something touching in the devotion to one another of the two old scholars, — Niccolo copying, in his clear beautiful Italic, some passage of Chrysostom which Ambrogio's old and trembling hand could not transcribe, and this latter, in his turn, helping his friend with Greek texts which were hard to unravel. And yet again Ambrogio's official position and the support of the Medici opened to him the Libraries of many Convents, and enabled him to impart to Niccolo, in his frequent letters, the joy of newly discovered treasures of the past.

Such was the scholar whom Gianozzo Manetti had chosen for his instructor in Greek : but Manetti was a character less complex and more sincere, devoid of the inconsistencies of Ambrogio. He cannot be called a Humanist, in the same sense as the little group of scholars whom we have been studying, seeing that his whole (or main) interest in scholarship was to place the results of his learning at the service of the Church.

"He kept," says Vespasiano in his Commentary, "two Greeks and a converted Jew in his house; and only allowed the Greeks to converse with him in Greek, and the Jew similarly in his own tongue." At the same time his proficiency in Latin was regarded as phenomenal. When the Florentine Secretary, Carlo of Arezzo (Marsuppini), delivered a set oration in Latin to the Emperor Frederick III., Æneas Sylvius, who was in the Emperor's suite, replied in the same tongue, but Messer Carlo who had no prepared reply, could not answer. Manetti, who was fortunately there as a member of the Signory, stepped into the breach, and delivered a brilliant extempore speech in Latin. Burckhardt tells us that when Gianozzo was sent by the Signory of Florence to congratulate Alfonso of Aragon, King of Naples on the marriage of Prince Ferrante, the effect of the Florentine scholar's oration on this cultured Prince "was so great that, hearing him speak, he remained motionless upon his throne like a statue of bronze, without even moving a hand to brush away the flies." Yet

Manetti's writings had not the same fame or circulation as those of the contemporaries we have just studied; and, as a matter of fact, his Latin seems to have been correct, colourless, and terribly prolix. But his character as man and a Christian appears as being above reproach, even in that lax and censorious age. He placed his talents at the service of the Republic, and used his vast learning in defence of the Church: we hear of a great polemical work against the Jews and Heathen (*contra Judæos et Gentes*), which — perhaps without loss to posterity — never reached completion. Set by the Republic over the city of Pistoja he administered its affairs with such impartial justice that none could ever tell to which of the two opposing parties in that State his sympathies really inclined, and that when he was recalled, all the citizens implored for his return; while Vespasiano, who knew him intimately for fourteen years, declares that in all that time he never knew a foul word or lie or oath to issue from his lips. But this great scholar and statesman fell under the suspicions of the Medici — was perhaps too fine a character, too little open to influence or money considerations, to be welcome to them. They first attacked him openly, on the charge of having dedicated his work on the "Dignity of Man" (a subject worthy of the best impulse of the Renaissance) to Alfonso King of Naples: the charge failed completely.

Then they tried a yet meaner and more cruel weapon of attack: using their immense political influence they piled up such taxes and imposts upon Manetti that at last he was compelled to abandon his native city. He found a refuge and welcome at Rome with the cultured Pope Nicolas V., and later at Naples with King Alfonso the Magnanimous: his friend Vespasiano Bisticci wrote a detailed biography (*Commentario della vita di Messer Gianozzo Manetti*) of this scholar which is full of interest.

One name has yet to be included among these scholars of the Medicean circle — a name which has already frequently entered these pages, and which indeed it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to keep out of them.

Poggio Bracciolini was born at Castel Terranuova, near Florence, and

ALLEGORICAL FIGURE OF A BOY.
By DONATO DI BETTO BARDI, called DONATELLO.

(National Museum, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



though much of his life was spent away from that city, it always remained the centre of his thoughts, the object of his devotion, his intellectual and, we might add, his spiritual country. Salutati had taken charge of him when, very poor and a mere lad, he first came to Florence; and later Niccolo de' Niccoli had been almost a father to the young student, — lending him books, money, urging him on to the study of those immortal ancients!

Poggio was, indeed, very probably at Florence when Chrysoloras made his famous visit, and he was later employed by Cosimo to copy the "Letters of Cicero to Atticus": but soon after this we find him to have become attached to the Papal Curia, and fully fifty years of his life was passed in that position.

His discoveries of ancient texts at Constance, to which I have alluded, added to his rising fame as a scholar; but what we have to notice especially is that Poggio, while his life and energies were fully employed in the business of the Curia at Rome, or in Germany, France or England, never ceased for one moment to regard Florence as the true home of his soul. "Once a year at least," he writes from Rome, "I must run over to Florence;" and in fact he left his books in this last city, under the charge of Ambrogio Traversari, within the Convent of the Angels. Of his unshaken devotion to Niccolo and their constant correspondence, I have already spoken; and, when Florence and the Florentines were abused by Duke Filippo Maria of Milan as "foolished and mole-eyed" (*Stolti e ciechi*), Poggio rushes into the breach to declare that "there is no city in all Italy to be compared with Florence for her intellectual life, her learning, her clear common-sense and her refinement of life (*gentilezza di costumi*)."

At length, after Carlo Marsuppini's death, Poggio saw the dream of his life realized, when the Republic invited him to succeed this great scholar as Chancellor of the State.

He was already seventy-three years, and the duties of his new office were very heavy, but he did not hesitate (June 8, 1453) to undertake them,

setting before himself the example of his old friends Salutato, Bruni and Marsuppini in that same Chancellery; and the Signory kindly endeavoured to help his burden by letting some part of it fall upon younger shoulders. He had been always a firm supporter of the Medici, and we have seen that he "entered the links" as their champion against Felfo. His literary quarrels, in fact, were famous, and included his "battle-royal" with Lorenzo Valla, and that with the great Veronese scholar, Guarino, on the respective merits of Julius Cæsar and Scipio Africanus the Elder. That wandering Humanist, Ciriaco of Ancona, whom I have described elsewhere, was so ill-advised as to put his nose into this very pretty quarrel with some remarks, in a writing which he called "Imperial," in favour of Cæsar. This was quite sufficient for Poggio, who fell upon him without mercy or decency of diction, calling him a muddle-headed fool, a wandering lunatic, a hairy Satyr and a two-legged ass! But our scholar's literary conflicts were not always thus confined to words. "When Georgios Trapezuntios," says Symonds, "at Rome declared that he, Georgios, had really done the work of Poggio's translations from Diodorus and Xenophon, Poggio shrieked out: 'You lie in your throat!' Georgios retorted with a box on Poggio's ear. Then Poggio came to close quarters, catching his adversary by the hair, and the two Professors pommelled each other till their respective pupils parted them."

Poggio's pen was known indeed to be so venomous and unsparing that even great Princes stood in terror of it: in this respect he foreshadows such later literary aberrations of the Renaissance as Pietro Aretino, just as within what he called his "gymnasiolum" at Rome his collection of antiques illustrates another essential phase of Renaissance culture. His enthusiasm for this last was unbounded, and we may believe to be perfectly sincere. *Delector supra modum his sculpturis*, he writes, *adeo ut curiosus earum dici possim*, when he hears of an hundred statues which had been found complete in one cave, or of an Apollo which had come to light: "I am delighted above measure in these sculptures," and he bids his agent spare no pains to collect them for love or money; while

EQUESTRIAN MONUMENT OF GATTAMELATA.

By DONATO DI BETTO BARDI, called DONATELLO.

(Before S. Antonio at Padua.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



his delight is increased when such an accepted master as Donatello has praised his collection.

Already, in 1438, he had come to possess that supreme delight of the Florentine burgher, a villa where he could escape from the tedious duties of the Curia to converse with his beloved books; and, thanks to Cosimo's patronage, he had now also a house within the city. He had married (in 1435) a Florentine girl of good family (*Vaggia degli Buondelmonti*), renouncing thus his hopes of ecclesiastical preferment as well as the illegitimate offspring which his concubine had already brought him. *Vaggia* was only eighteen when she married him, and gave him numerous children. "In fact," says Voight, "the old sinner seems to have led a very happy existence with his *Vaggia*, till death took her from him only seven months before he died himself" (1459). Cosimo de' Medici saw that he was given honourable interment — on the 2nd November, 1459 — behind the choir of S. Croce, and his bust was set within the Palace of the Signory at Florence.

The group of scholars whom we have here studied in the persons of Niccolo de' Niccoli, Leonardo Bruni, Carlo Marsuppini, Ambrogio Traversari, to a less extent Manetti, and to a greater Poggio Bracciolini, were nearly all intimate members of the Medicean circle. To say that Cosimo de' Medici (and yet more after him Lorenzo) was the patron of these men, their financial pillar, is not enough. He was far more than this. He guided them by his practical good sense and knowledge of life, but he also imbibed their inspiration and fully shared their ideas. "Whosoever, in such a position as that held by Cosimo," says Burckhardt, very justly, "both as merchant prince and head of a great party in Florence, has also on his side the whole band of those who think, who study, who write; whosoever both by his family position is considered as the first of the Florentines, and by his intellectual culture takes a place among the greatest of the Italians, — whoever is such a man as this cannot be considered merely as a private individual. Whether he takes the name and title or not he is really a Prince." And even if the premise here be slightly overstated,

if we have seen an illustrious Latinist such as Manetti crushed down by undeserved taxation or a statesman and scholar like Palla degli Strozzi driven forth into unmerited exile, yet the conclusion, which puts this Medici prince at the head of the culture of his age, is in no way exaggerated. And we have yet to reserve for a later chapter the highest of his claims upon posterity.

Cosimo, with his marvellous intuition, his wide sympathy and culture — which made him as much at home in art as in politics or literature, with Donatello or Brunelleschi as with Niccolo or Bracciolini — had discerned in that recovered past the illuminating genius of Plato, and, with his clear common sense, had at once selected — and selected rightly — the man for the end at which he aimed.

In Plato's teaching, with its lofty spirituality, its breadth of mental vision, these thinkers of the Renaissance believed that their hope of union could be found, their starting point for a new philosophy of religion be secured; and Marsilio Ficino, who was selected by Cosimo for this special purpose, and specially trained in the Platonic thought, was the priest of this new cult.

When Ficino was forty-four years of age he had already completed his translation into Latin of Plato's works; and his edition of Plotinus was published a month after Lorenzo's death and at his charge — *Magni sumptu Laurentii patriæ servatoris*. He had thus passed on from the Platonic theory of ideas to those vaguer, more mystical philosophic systems of the Neo-Platonists; yet Ficino himself remained always a sincere Christian, even while he gave his life and talents with single-hearted devotion to this one subject of the study and elucidation of Platonic thought.

It would require a special chapter, or at least a greater space than I have here at my disposal, to approach from its philosophic side that *Accademia Platonica* of which Lorenzo himself was a leading member; for if, in some directions, we have advanced in later years in the critical exposition of Plato's thought, he was never been "loved better or worshipped more devoutly than by this Florentine Academy."

It is probable that the visit to Florence of the Greek Gemistos Plethon

A FALCON.

(The Arms of Piero de' Medici.)

By MICHELLOZZO.

Basilica of S. Miniato al Monte, Florence

Photo Alinari, Florence.

gave to Cosimo his first impulse in this direction; and we have seen that Leonardo Bruni had been busied in translation of Plato's dialogues. But it was Cosimo who selected Marsilio Ficino, a brilliant youth of eighteen, who brought him into his own household that he might devote himself to the study of Platonic thought. We shall (in Chapter IV) return to Marsilio among that little group of original thinkers, that inner circle of Platonists who surrounded Lorenzo de' Medici : but here we have to note that Cosimo has "the glory of having recognized in the Platonic thought the fairest fruit of the ancient philosophy, of having transfused this thought of his into his immediate circle, and of having created within this very circle of the Humanists themselves a second, and yet fairer, Renaissance of Antiquity."



PANORAMA OF FLORENCE, WITH THE CAMP OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

From the Painting by GIORGIO VASARI.

Hall of Clement VII., Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

Photo Alinari, Florence.



CHAPTER II.

FLORENTINE ART UNDER COSIMO DE' MEDICI.



WE have now reached a point when it will be useful to our survey to enquire what progress had been reached by the formative arts at Florence during this earlier period of the Medicean influence.

Sculpture through the whole course of Italian art was earlier in her development than painting. At the same time in taking sculpture first into our consideration we must remember that we are already far away from the days when Niccolo Pisano went back for the inspiration of his art to those antique sarcophagi which still line the Pisan Campo Santo, or carved the pulpit of Siena Duomo, when Giovanni his son designed the great fountain of Perugia or his pulpit at Pistoja, or when, under Giotto's influence, Andrea de Pontedera created his marble reliefs of the Campanile of S. Maria del Fiore or his bronzes of the Florentine Baptistry.

Some knowledge of these earlier workers (which the reader can obtain from the accepted text books) is indeed necessary to the comprehension

of the men of the Quattrocento; just as to the study of Ghiberti, Donatello, and, among the painters, Piero de Cosimo or Botticelli some knowledge of the intellectual movement of their age is essential. The Renaissance is indeed one movement, but a movement vast and complex, with many side issues and many diverse aspects. Yet it was within the power at this time of such men of comprehensive genius as Cosimo or Lorenzo de' Medici to keep fairly in touch with these diverse aspects of the same movement; and we shall find that our recent study of the Humanists will not be time wasted when we turn now to the art of their period.

In sculpture, especially, it is obvious that the tradition of Niccolo Pisano and more directly the art of Andrea must have influenced enormously their successors. Andrea Pisano had designed those lovely southern doors of the Florentine Baptistery. "To overpraise," writes Symonds, "the simplicity and beauty of design.... and the technical excellence of Andrea's bronze work would be difficult," and I have said myself: "No Florentine sculptor, not even Ghiberti himself, can have felt the pure beauty of form more intensely than the craftsman of this southern gate of the Baptistery." When Lorenzo di Cione Ghiberti competed with Filippo Brunelleschi and the Sienese sculptor Della Quercia for the completion of these gates on the western and eastern sides, he had before him the example of his great predecessor; and, indeed, in his northern gate (the story of the New Testament) he seems to have followed Andrea's treatment pretty closely.

But in his second door, facing the Cathedral, he gave his completed genius its full bent, and accomplished a miracle of art, which is as yet unsurpassed in what might be called pictorial sculpture. *Eve gliding upwards out of the opened side of the sleeping Man* (panel I), *Abraham receiving the three angels* at his tent door (panel IV), the detailed figures in the *Story of Jacob and Esau* (panel V) and the massing of figures and elaborate perspective in the *Joseph and his Brethren* (panel VI) will carry Ghiberti's fame down to all time as one of the world's most consummate

sculptors, and take away all regrets that the master of the reliefs of S. Petronio had been excluded by the Florentines from the competition, and that Brunelleschi had withdrawn in favour of his rival.

Della Quercia was harassed by over many commissions, and Brunelleschi had perhaps felt that his highest laurels were to be gained in the cognate art of architecture. When he raised his vast dome of Florence Cathedral he had, no doubt, the neighbouring Baptistery, his *bel S. Giovanni* in his mind : but here he set free the cupola (which the older architect of the Baptistery had enclosed within the building, so that its beauty is hidden from without) and setting it erect upon its drum left it to soar up to the heavens, — to deserve Alberti's noble description. "Who so hard and so envious is there as not to praise our architect Pippo when he looks upon so vast a structure, upright beneath the heavens, ample enough to cover with its shade all the people of Tuscany..... such a work as might have seemed incredible of execution in these our times, nay such as even the ancients may perhaps have never known or understood."

The influence of classic architecture upon Brunelleschi probably dates from his visit to Rome in 1403 ; and Donatello, then still a youth, was his companion in the Eternal City. Brunelleschi's friendship was a power for good in the progress of the young Florentine sculptor, and how intensely this latter had drank in the classic spirit at Rome is seen in his Bacchic frieze for his patron, the banker Martelli.

On the front of Orsammichele, or the side facing the Via Calzaioli, we see yet Donatello's shrine, containing the two bronze figures of Christ and S. Thomas—their subject, the *Incredulity of S. Thomas*—their artist, Andrea Verrocchio. Here, while the shrines on either side of this are still Gothic in their treatment, Donatello's work is already pure Renaissance design, and very interesting from this point of view, as being one of the earliest (if not *the* very earliest) example of Renaissance work in Florence. It is singularly rich in treatment with its fluted Corinthian columns, its frieze of children heads with wreaths, its masks and its winged angel boys

beneath. What Donatello must have gained from the inspiration of Rome, and from the influence of his friend Brunelleschi, we may judge from this delightful bit of architectural setting, which the visitor to Florence should not overlook.

For the more we come to study Brunelleschi the more we recognize in him a highly artistic and original creative genius. After trying his powers in other branches of art-work he found it advisable to centralize his strength on architecture, in which he achieved such enduring fame : but he had already crossed our path as competing for the bronze doors of the Baptistery ; and who does not know the delightful story, told by Vasari, of his famous *Crucifix* of S. Maria Novella ? One of the main features of Donatello's art was its rugged uncompromising realism ; and Brunelleschi, when asked by his friend for a criticism of his own figure of Christ on the Cross, told him that he had crucified a *contadino* (farm-labourer) : Donatello, nettled at the remark retorted, that it was far easier to criticize than to create. Filippo made no reply, but quietly set to work upon a Crucifix, and when it was finished invited his friend, who met him in the market, to bring the eggs he had bought there with him, and come to his house to lunch. Then, contriving an excuse to let Donatello enter the studio alone, where his figure was placed in a good light, the eggs went all on to the floor and, when Filippo returned, he was told : "To you it has been granted to carve Christ, to me only *contadini* (*a te è concesso fare i Christi, a me i contadini*). " The famous *Crucifix* is still in S. Maria Novella, over the altar of the Capella dei Gondi, on the left of the choir. "Evidently," says Crowe, of Brunelleschi, "his nature as an artist was on a higher level than that of Donatello, and free from the naturalism which in the succeeding century did such harm to the religious spirit."

But this impulse towards realism, which was in the spirit of the time, has its own merits, and imparts an element of sincerity to the work of Donato which is itself of the highest value. "If a Magdalen were demanded of him," says Symonds, "he would not condescend to model

THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN.

From the Painting by FRA FILIPPO LIPPI.

(*Academy of Fine Arts, Florence.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



a Venus, and then place a book and skull upon a rock beside her, nor did he imagine that the bloom and beauty of a laughing Faun were fitting attributes for the preacher of repentance.... The motive of his art was clearly apprehended, his method was sincere, certain phases of profound emotion had to be represented with the physical characteristics proper to them."

Sometimes, it is true, this sincerity arrives at a harsh insistence on fact that is almost repellent : in a less degree the famous "Zuccone" (*David*) and *Jeremiah* of S. Maria del Fiore, in a far greater degree the *Baptist* of the Siena Baptistery, and the painfully ascetic *Magdalen* of the Baptistery of Florence carry these qualities of his art to an excess.

Yet can we even regret this when we find what a profound science this determined study of reality has given him. Vasari had said of his *David*—which stood at first in Cosimo's day, within the *cortile* of the Palazzo Medici — that "this figure is so natural, so living, so soft (*tanto naturale nella vivacità e morbidezza*) that to his fellow craftsmen it seems impossible that it should not have been cast from the living model." "The young champion," I wrote elsewhere, "stands in the moment of victory with his right foot planted on the helmeted head of Goliath, grasping a long straight sword — life-size, and all but naked, with a helmet pressing down the locks that escape in luxuriant curls." The helmet which covers the giant's decapitated head is of antique design, and finely modelled in relief with Cupids and genii. In this masterpiece of his art which has come down to us almost intact (slight restorations, in the left leg especially, are to be noted) Donatello held under control that consuming fire of production, that creative energy of his temperament, and gave us a work which combines with his science of the human body and his breadth of modelling the very highest ideal beauty.

To me this *David* symbolizes in his naked beauty the new breath of Renaissance inspiration, just as much as the noble S. George looks back to those ages of Christian art which the brush of Giotto had illustrated ; and, technically, I must reserve my highest admiration for the little relief

which once stood beneath this S. George in his niche without Orsam-michele. Here we may almost call the treatment of the marble "modern" in the best sense, namely in the sense that the artist has given his attention to the relation of the planes and to the masses, and has eliminated superfluous detail. Yet the action has been fully preserved, and shews all Donatello's fire of temperament in the charging Christian knight, in the swing of the maiden's figure; while in his woman's head in profile (like the above now in the Museo Nazionale) he shews his consummate science in handling the most delicate relief. So that this Florentine touches all sides of his art—from the most ruggedly insistent realism to the most ideal beauty, from the most vehement action to the most tranquil calm of this last. He was living, too, in the most creative period of the early Renaissance, sharing to the full in its interests and enthusiasms, and influenced no doubt—though his art was always to him the absorbing impulse—by the scholars whose lives we have traced in the last chapter. We have seen already his beautiful *David* in its first home within the *Cortile* of the Medici Palace; and it was for his friend and patron Cosimo de' Medici that he cast into bronze his group of *Judith and Holofernes*—a somewhat clumsy creation, but whose history is significant of the times. The group now stands within the Loggia de Lanzi, but when the Medici fell (1494) and their palace was sacked it was taken possession of by the Signory, and placed upon a pedestal before the gate of their Palace, with the inscription (a hint to would-be despots): *Exemplum salutis publicæ cives posuere, MCCCCXCV*.

Who does not know Donatello's relief of dancing boys, originally intended for the organ loft of S. Maria del Fiore, and now in the Opera del Duomo: it is a poem of movement frozen into marble, and, if it was commissioned in 1433 by the Commune of Florence for its Cathedral, is it an extravagant demand that it should be restored to the "Cantoria" for which it was intended? More fortunate are the natives of Prato, where without his Cathedral is his pulpit with a similar relief. Though he left no direct school his influence over Italian art was immense, and even in

its realism eminently sane and helpful. Verrocchio, carrying forward his tradition at Florence, and Mantegna, at Padua, may have seen and studied his *Gattamelata* and his Paduan reliefs in S. Antonio; but when Donato di Niccolo di Betto Bardi died (in 1446, at the age of eighty) "the highest light of Italian sculpture in its most promising period was extinguished."

At the same time that sculpture was taking this immense advance in Florence, and actually reaching the heights which, in some respects, it has never since exceeded, the sister art of painting was equally busied in obtaining a surer foothold upon the technical side of her craft, as a preliminary to yet further advance. The great impulse given by Giotto had been prolonged by his followers—until, in the later work of the Bicci, it came to lose all spontaneity and arrived at merely a weak mechanical repetition of themes which the master or his more immediate followers had already handled; and that exquisite religious art of Fra Angelico, which derives more directly from the great Orcagna, was really apart from the movement of the new age. That movement is typified for us in one of its sides by the figure of the Florentine painter Paolo de' Doni, called Paolo Uccello. Brunelleschi had already given to the artists of his time some conception of the laws of perspective. He had drawn, we are told, in perspective the Piazza del Duomo at Florence with its Campanile, Baptistry, and the surrounding houses, as well as the Piazza della Signoria with the Loggia de' Lanzi and other buildings.

At the same time Masaccio, by his paintings in the Brancacci chapel of the Carmine at Florence, had given a new conception of their art to these Florentine painters; besides the dignity of his figures and their breadth of treatment there appears here for the first time what was lacking in the work of the Giottesques—a sense of atmosphere and aerial perspective. Both Masaccio himself (1402-1429) and his predecessor Masolino lie outside the limits of our period, but the former's influence (as Cellini bears witness) was immense on the painters immediately succeeding him, and without doubt reached that most enquiring spirit of Paolo

Doni. "The love," says Crowe, "which, in the fifteenth century, continued constantly increasing for literature and Greek philosophy,—a passion against which Savonarola thundered in vain,—found expression in every side of art. The artists of this period of transformation had felt almost instinctively that, to attain their dream of ideal perfection, they needed to bring back simplicity and truth to their art by a more sincere and loving study of nature." And again Symonds adds—"The whole intellectual conditions of the century were those of growth, experiment, preparation and acquisition rather than of full accomplishment. What happened in the field of painting was happening also in the field of scholarship; and we have good reason to be thankful that, by the very nature of the arts, these tentative endeavours have a more enduring charm than the dull tones of contemporary students. Nor again is it rational to regret that painting, having started with the sincere desire of expressing the hopes and fears that agitate the soul of man, and raise him to a spiritual region, should now be occupied with lessons in perspective and anatomy. In the twofold process of discovering the world and man this dry ground had inevitably to be explored."

Such an explorer was Paolo Doni; and, as such, he is even more interesting for the spirit that prompted him than for his actual artistic achievement.

Born in the last years of the fourteenth century, he was, in 1407, employed as a "Garzone" in the Bottega (workshop) of Lorenzo Ghiberti, who was even then busied on his doors of the Florentine Baptistery; and there perhaps imbibed the passion for perspective which was to haunt him through his life. Donatello was here probably Paolo's fellow student, though he later considered his friend's passion carried to excess. "Your love for perspective," he said to Paolo, "makes you abandon the certain for the uncertain: these subjects of yours are only good for those who work in marquetry." Indeed there is a very wooden quality apparent in much of Paolo's surviving work—in his equestrian figure of the English Condottiere *Sir John Hawkwood*, painted by him in *grisaille* within the Florentine Duomo,—in his frescoes of the Cloisters of S. Maria Novella,—in his



THE FUNERAL OF SAINT STEPHEN.

From the Fresco by Fra Filippo Lippi.

(Choir of Prato Cathedral.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



Battle-pieces which once adorned the garden of the Bartolini at Gualfonda, near Florence, one among which is now in the National Gallery of London and another in the Louvre.

The portrait of *Hawkwood*, painted in fresco in monochrome (within the Florence Duomo on the right as we enter) gave so little satisfaction to the Building Committee of the *Fabbrica* that they compelled Paolo to repaint it.

Even so it is hardly criticized by Vasari. "The work of Paolo would be quite right if he had not represented a horse lifting his two legs at once on the same side, — a thing which horses do not do, because if they did they would inevitably fall over (*perche cascherrebbono*).” The same author tells us that "Paolo in the house of the Medici painted in tempera on canvas certain stories of animals in which he greatly delighted, and to achieve success in which he took immense pains. Besides this he kept in his house painted birds, cats, and dogs, and every kind of strange animal he could draw not being able to keep them alive because he was so poor (*per esser povero*); and because he took more pleasure in birds than in anything else he was nicknamed Paolo Uccello" — which we might translate as Paul Bird.

These paintings for the Medici, now lost, like his work in S. Trinità and S. Miniato fuori le mura, may have resembled the still surviving paintings in *grisaille* within the cloisters of S. Maria Novella, where Paolo thoroughly enjoys himself among the animal creation, using the story of the Ark to give us a carefully studied back view of a dog as he enters that place of safety.

Generally Uccello prefers *grisaille* or monochrome for his hard precise wooden-looking figures : but when he does venture upon colour (as in his *Battle-pieces* in the National Gallery, Louvre and Uffizi) he shews a really fine perception both of colour and of decorative spacing; and what we always get with him is his tediously exact, but often most quaint, rendering of figures in movement and in perspective. In the Florentine painting last mentioned (Uffizi) the composition is as fine as is the colour

scheme, the action well thought out in its detail — the crash of the charging knights in the foreground, the archers and footmen advancing in the rear—but the science of its construction is obtrusively prominent, we see “the lifeless and wooden models of divers figures without the dressing that shall give them life.” In the London picture, if we take the view that it represents the battle of S. Egidio, it is Carlo Malatesta who gives the order to advance, clad in steel and mounted on a white horse, while behind him rides his nephew Galeazzo, a beautiful fair-haired boy; the knights advance and the trumpeters peal out the charge. In the Louvre painting the composition is so arranged as to bring out the figure of the commander, clad in complete armour, and putting his black horse to the gallop : but here a point of secondary but considerable interest is the treatment of the footsoldiers, who advance behind at a quick run, just as in the London picture the laboured foreshortening of a fallen knight or man-at-arms is no less typical of our artist. A quaintly sympathetic figure this Florentine painter, “Paolo of the birds,” living a life of constant poverty and unremitting study, meeting his poor wife at nights, when she implored him to take a little rest, with the enraptured cry—*Oh che dolce cosa e questa prospettiva!* (How sweet a pursuit is this perspective!),—dying at last still poor, and leaving “whole boxes full of drawings (*casse piene di disegni*)” to his relatives. It might well seem to that keen Florentine Donatello that his poor friend “abandoned the certain for the uncertain.” Yet all this life of study was really fruitful, not so much to the artist himself but to future workers; who reaped the full advantage of his studies when Luca Signorelli in his Orvietan frescoes, or Michelangelo in those of the Sixtine Chapel, or again Correggio, in his dome of Parma Cathedral, whirled their foreshortened figures through mid-air with consummate knowledge of their art.

Paolo Doni is a link in this chain of the world's art, and we can afford to overlook this wooden mechanism and obtrusive science of his *œuvre* in our recognition of its sincerity and lasting value.

The tendency which we have noted in Uccello appears in other painters

of the period, taking different form according to their diversity of character. But in all it is this actual living world which obtrudes itself upon the art of mediæval Christianity, and introduces a fresh element of growth. In Andrea del Castagno it is the vigour of life, which finds issue in his frankly resolute treatment both of technique and subject. His Sibyls and Heroes, of the Villa Pandolfini at Legnaia or in the refectory of Sant' Apollonia at Florence, stand firmly on their feet, and are painted in broad, vigorous handling of fresco.

I shall describe these later in detail; and therefore pass on now to other Florentine painters who are no less significant of their epoch.

For with Domenico Veneziano and with Piero della Francesca this same tendency appears in the research into the technical possibilities of painting, the treatment of *chiaroscuro*, the better handling of perspective : with Gentile da Fabriano and with Benozzo, whom we shall take later, in their almost naive delight in the living world of birds and beasts and flowers. With one very interesting artist, whose later life falls well within our period, the contrast between these new tendencies and the older message of Christian teaching assumes concrete form both in his art and even in his life story, and has been analysed psychologically by our English poet, Robert Browning. Left as a poor orphan at Florence Filippo Lippi was placed as a mere child of six years old with the monks of the Carmine (1420), and completed his novitiate and gained admission to the order when he was about fifteen years of age.

But it was to this very church of the Carmine that Masaccio was called at this time (about 1427) to decorate the chapel of the Brancacci. Watching the great artist at work upon his now world-famous frescoes the young monk was caught by his inspiration, and perhaps given his first lessons in painting by the master himself; but Fra Lippo's earlier paintings within the cloister and church of the Carmine were destroyed by fire in 1771. We find Fra Lippo's name in the convent account books in 1430-31, with the designation of "painter;" but after 1431 he disappears from the records, and Vasari has a story that he had been captured on the

coast of Ancona by corsairs and taken for eighteen months to Barbary. He returns to us as a completed master in his *Coronation of the Virgin*, now in the Florence Academy of Fine Arts, where, too, is his delightful *Nativity*.

In this *Coronation* multitudes of angels, bearing great "Madonna" lilies fill the two sides of the painting. In its centre Christ crowns the kneeling Virgin, and not the least delightful part of the whole painting are the little roundels of the *Annunciation* let into the frame at the two sides of the central group. Beneath this group are massed together many figures of Saints, monks, bishops, and holy women of old, — among whom suddenly appears no other than the Frate himself, bearing as it were his card of admission to the saintly gathering in the scroll in his hand, with its legend, *Is perfecit opus* (*He it was who did this work*).

The colour scheme here, with its cool greys and silvery tones, is quite typical of Fra Lippo; but sometimes we find that against this habitual soberness of tone he brings out one strong colour, generally a blue. His two *Nativities* of this Florence Academy may serve to illustrate this point. In the one, where Saints and Angels join the slim young Virgin in adoration the whole colour scheme is kept low in tone; cool greys predominate, and no strong colour is allowed to enter. In the other — where the ox and ass are introduced beside a kneeling S. Jerome, the little S. John with his scroll of *Ecce Agnus Dei*, and a white-robed monk — the colour of the background is a grey green, against which Madonna forms a brilliant note of pale blue and crimson.

Nor must we forget in this Academy his charming *Predella*, with its *Annunciation* and the stories of four Saints (*SS. Francis, Damian, Cosimo and Anthony of Padua*), nor his *Virgin enthroned* with four saints, where again we find this favourite grey-green in the colour, with blue and crimson abruptly introduced.

In 1456 Fra Filippo was chaplain of the convent of Santa Margarita at Prato, the little city which still contains within her Cathedral the Master's delightful frescoes illustrating the *Story of S. John Baptist and of*

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD, WITH FOUR SAINTS.

From the Painting by DOMENICO DI BARTOLOMMEO VENEZIANO.

(Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



S. Stephen. The Frate was also engaged at the date just mentioned on an altar-piece for the high-altar of the convent church, and succeeded in obtaining the permission of the Abbess, Bartolommea de' Bovachiesi, that one of her nuns should pose to him for his figure of the Virgin. There were in the Convent at that time two young sisters, the daughters of a Florentine silk merchant, their names Spinetta Buti and Lucrezia, her elder sister. Their father Francesco Buti had died, and their brother Antonio, left with a large family on his hands, had placed both these young girls in the Convent of Santa Margarita at Prato : Lucrezia, having been born in 1433, was now twenty-three, and Spinetta was one year younger. The chaplain of the convent, it has been hinted, had already seen and fallen in love with the charming elder sister : in any case when Lucrezia was permitted to pose for him—with a companion perhaps her sister as a safeguard—Fra Lippo declared his passion, and obtained a not unfavourable response.

The great *feſta* of the “Cintola” (the girdle which Mary dropped in her ascent to Heaven) was at hand, when the nuns were permitted to leave the Convent walls so that they might see the sacred relic. Fra Lippo seized the moment when the sisters were absorbed in the ceremony to carry off his love, and take her to his house. A child, who was afterwards Filippino Lippi, was the result of their union. Vasari's story seems here to be confirmed by later research. In fact the example set by Lucrezia Buti and their chaplain seems to have created a general demoralization within the convent. Spinetta Buti now joined her sister in the artist's home, and three others of the nuns escaped with their lovers; so that, out of a total number of eight in the Convent, only four, including the Abbess, now remained within its walls.

However the matter was hushed up by the Ecclesiastical authorities, and, eventually, after two years of absence all the five wandering sheep, including Lucrezia herself, returned to the Convent fold, and renewed their vows (Dec. 23, 1458) making solemn promise to reform their morals, preserve their chastity, and to obey for the future the rules of their order (*conversionem suorum morum et castitatem, ... osservare*).

In spite of all this both Spinetta and Lucrezia seem to have made a second escape, in 1461; and this time the scandal reached a climax. A secret denunciation (May 8, 1461) accused both Piero d'Antonio, the Procurator of the Convent, and "another who is named Fra Filippo" to have used their opportunities for entering the convent to lead astray the nuns. "The aforesaid brother Filippo has had a male child by a nun called Spinetta. The child is in their house and is growing up, and his name is Filippino." There seems here to be a mistake (which might easily be made) between the two sisters: but Fra Filippo, threatened by the ecclesiastical authorities, evidently feared a second separation from Lucrezia, and he now appealed to the Pope through the powerful intercession of Cosimo de' Medici.

Under this pressure Pope Pius II. agreed that the two lovers should be freed from their vows, and that Lucrezia should remain with Fra Filippo as his wife. They now lived together, and Lucrezia gave to her husband, in 1465, a daughter who was named Alessandra; at the same time, however, Fra Lippo lost his chaplaincy and other ecclesiastical appointments, and had to depend on his brush for his livelihood.

It is now time to return to his art creations, among which his frescoes of the Cathedral of Prato rank in importance beside his noble *Coronation of the Virgin* in the Cathedral of Spoleto.

The choir of Prato Cathedral is entirely frescoed — both its right and left walls and ceiling — by Fra Filippo at a mature, but still most impressionable, moment of his genius, when the domestic events which I have just described must have been agitating his mind. His subjects are here the *Stories of S. Stephen and S. John Baptist*, and in the ceiling he treats, in a beautiful decorative scheme, the four *Evangelists*. On the left side the *Story of S. Stephen* begins, in the upper tier, with his ordination and miracles, and the whole of the lower tier deals with the funeral of this Saint and Martyr.

Within a noble Cathedral the dead body lies upon a catafalque. Two women sit, the one at its head, the other at the foot, and behind them

are grouped the mourners, among whom we discover Fra Filippo himself, Fra Diamante his assistant, and a red-robed portly figure who is Messer Carlo de' Medici. In this spacious scene Masaccio comes back to our mind : in these grandly grouped figures we trace the influence of the Brancacci Chapel. But in the *Story of S. John Baptist* on the wall opposite, the painter gets clean away from Masaccio, and delights us by revealing all that is most idyllic in his own conception. From the first he captivates us in the scene where the little S. John (as a boy of about fourteen) takes leave of his parents to go forth alone to the wilderness. Then we get his desert life, and the scenes of his preaching, of his call to repentance.

But, as in the story of S. Stephen, so here too, it is in the lower fresco that the artist has put forth all his strength. In a fluttering robe of white, girdled at the waist and looped up again above the hips, Salome whirls across the fresco in the full swing of her *pas seul*.

The whole front of the room has been cleared for her dance. Above her golden hair a thin veil is fastened : she wears sleeves of blue, and above these from the shoulders long ribbons ripple out across the room and add to the suggestion of quick movement. Behind her the guests sit at the banquet table some watching her, some drinking out of great goblets, some talking, while Herodias, in the place of honour upon Herod's right, is one of our artist's most captivating creations — a lovely blonde, with charming irregular features and a wonderful neck. This group is balanced on the other side by the scene in which Salome herself presents the Baptist's head to her mother Herodias, while the tyrant Herod turns his head away, wringing his hands in a sort of weak remorse.

Fra Lippo has kept his two models of Herodias and Salome quite distinct in both scenes. They are young girls, about nineteen to twenty-one, and look like sisters, — Salome being exceptionally tall and well-formed, while Herodias possesses the exquisite facial type and set of the head upon the shapely neck which I have described. I would suggest that Fra Lippo used Lucrezia Buti and her sister to pose for these two figures, one of whom re-appears in his *Virgin* (of the Uffizi) with *Jesus and little S. John*.

The lover of Fra Lippo's work cannot afford to miss these Prato frescoes. Less grandly conceived than his later Spoleto *Coronation of the Virgin*, they are fresher in feeling, more naïf, more idyllic and more personally inspired; and just those cool opalescent greys and silvery blues which we noted in his tempera *Coronation* (Academy) delight us here too.

Crowe considers that the earlier in date of his frescoes in Prato Cathedral are those which treat (on the right wall) this *Story of S. John Baptist*, beginning with the scene of the Saint's birth, then his departure from his parents, down to the famous banquet of Herod where Salome presents to her mother the Saint's head upon a charger, and two young girls, who clasp one another, look on with horror. "All these frescoes," says Symonds, "are noteworthy for their firm grasp upon reality in the portraits of Florentine worthies, and for the harmonious disposition of the groups; but the scene of Salome dancing before Herod is the best for its poetic feeling... Even more lovely than Salome are a pair of girls locked in each others' arms close to Herodias on the dais. A natural and spontaneous melody, not only in the suggested movements of this scene but also in the colouring, choice of form, and treatment of drapery, makes it one of the most musical of pictures ever painted."

Yet I found the Frate no less great and even maturer in his pictorial talent in his *Coronation of the Virgin* within Spoleto Cathedral, where (as in his treatment of this subject in the Florence Academy) multitudes of lovely angels crowd into the scene, as spectators of the ceremony, and share fully in its joy: here the composition is superb, and astonishes us by its originality and power. But death prevented him from finishing this grand creation, which was completed by his assistant Fra Diamante.

Fra Filippo always seems to have enjoyed the patronage and support of the Medici. We have seen that Cosimo's influence had settled the difficulties which had followed upon his adventure with Lucrezia, and it was through the same patron that he obtained his commission at Spoleto. "Fra Filippo," says Vasari, "ended his life at the age of fifty-seven, and to Fra Diamante he left by his will the charge of his son Filippo." The

PORTRAIT IN FRESCO OF PIPPO SPANO

From the Fresco by ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO.

(Ex-Convent of Santa Apollonia, Florence.)

Photo Alinari. Florence.



DOMINVS PHILIPPVS HISPANVS DESCOLARIS RELATOR RE GIE THEVCRO3

same writer, who has treated the Frate's moral character somewhat severely, adds that "Lorenzo de' Medici, when, as ambassador of the Florentines, he was passing through Spoleto begged of that Commune the body of Fra Lippo to place it within S. Maria del Fiore at Florence; but it was answered him by them that they had such lack of distinction, and especially of famous men, that they begged of him to excuse them this request, adding that within Florence there was such a superfluity of famous men that he could surely spare this one." So that Lorenzo was at last content to leave Fra Lippo to rest at Spoleto, but he commissioned the artist's son Filippino, to erect a marble monument there to the monastic painter of this living world — "at the cost of an hundred golden ducats, the which were paid by Nopi Tornabuoni, chief cashier (maestro) of the bank of the Medici." It was Angelo Poliziano who composed the epitaph which begins

Conditus hic ego sum picturæ fama Philippus...

and ends

Marmoreo tumulo Medices Laurentius hic me condidit...

thus adding to his praise of the painter a note of approval for the appreciative patron.

To our study Fra Filippo is of especial interest — as forming a link between the purely religious painters and those who, like Uccello, were absorbed by the technical side of their art, but no less as a master of high powers who influenced strongly the later generation of Florentine painters, especially his son Filippino and, yet more directly, Sandro Botticelli.

We shall see later how much Sandro owed to the Frate's masterly technique, in which, holding fast to the old methods of tempera, he was one of the best — if not the best — among the masters of his time : but, before we come to the fascinating creator of the *Primavera*, it is well worth our while to pause over a group of artists who were at this time much occupied in working out the technical problems of their art.

Domenico Veneziano comes first before our notice in 1438 as seeking

(probably not unsuccessfully) for the patronage of the Medici. In his letter from Perugia (April 15, 1438) to Piero di Cosimo de' Medici, he puts himself before their notice as candidate for an altar-piece which was then in commission; "and if that happens" (*i. e.* if he obtain the commission) "I have the hope in God to shew you marvellous things, seeing that there are good masters like Fra Filippo (*sic*) and Fra Giovanni (*i. e.* Fra Angelico) who have much work to do, and specially Fra Filippo for a picture which is to go into Santo Spirito."

A somewhat verbose and rambling epistle, but one whose object is very clearly to get into touch with these "Signori Medici," and get some of their orders into his hands.... "and if the work in question were so large that "Chossimo" (*i. e.* Cosimo) should think of giving it out to more masters than one, or to any one more than another, then I pray you, as far as it may be permitted a humble client to beseech a great Lord (*a servo pregare Signore*) that it may please you to use your kind influence on my behalf, and help me in even the smallest way."

This letter is all the more valuable to us because it gives us some clue to one of those elusive personalities in Italian art (Sassetta is just such another instance, in the art of Siena), who are very difficult to trace, but whose influence we feel in the work of other painters. And, in the case of this Domenico, Vasari is exceptionally misleading: he has created a legend of his life and death which completely breaks down before such a searching critical analysis as that of Gaetano Milanesi.

Vasari here, as elsewhere, mixes up fact with his fiction: he knew for instance, that Domenico had been at Perugia before he came to Florence, and adds that he had painted there "a room in the house of the Baglioni, which is now in ruins," and where other evidence shews there were painted by our artists twenty-five figures of men famous in war, philosophy or Civil law. But Vasari adds these words — "the painter Domenico Veneziano, at that time very famous, who was brought to Florence through the new method which he had of painting in oil colours." This statement is of extreme interest, as connecting him with the new

method of oil-painting which we shall find not long afterwards being freely practised by Perugino, and which was in fact to some extent "in the air" at this very time.

Of course the use of oil with colours was known at Florence as far back as the days when Cennino Cennini wrote his "Treatise on Painting," but the new method is said by Vasari to have been brought from Flanders to Venice by Antonello da Messina : on the other hand there seems to be nothing to shew that our Domenico (whose family was certainly of Venetian origin) ever met with Antonello, and it is significant that the only authentic painting by Domenico which remains to us is not painted in oil, but in the older method of tempera. I refer to the fine painting of *Madonna enthroned with Saints*, recorded by Vasari as painted for the high altar of S. Lucia de' Bardi, and now in the Uffizi Gallery, of which I shall give some account.

Madonna sits here enthroned beneath a pillared arcade, — on her right SS. Francis and S. John Baptist, on her left SS. Louis of Toulouse and Santa Lucia. Very charming is the rendering of these two latter Saints, especially the beautiful profile figure of Santa Lucia, which recalls the types of Fra Angelico. On the other hand, the careful perspective drawing of the background — of this delightful *cortile* with its coloured marble pavement — shews that our artist shared to the full in the movement of research at Florence, with which we have already associated the name of Paolo Uccello and must now include Domenico himself. No less characteristic is evidently the precise careful drawing of the nude throughout (which is excellent, structurally, in the anatomical forms), the rather bony hands with strongly marked knuckles (just as we shall find them later in the work of Botticelli), and the clearly drawn angular folds of the drapery. But what delights us the most of all in this altar-piece of Santa Lucia is the colour, which remains — and this in spite of a most severe and ungenerous cleaning and retouching on its way to the Gallery of the Uffizi — cool, translucent and harmonious. It is a painting which one does not tire of, which grows upon us; and it has been well said that

“studying it carefully we are forced to the conclusion that Domenico was one of the most brilliant painters of his period at Florence.”

Vasari's account of our artist's end is a tragic one, and leads us naturally to turn next to the work of his no less brilliant contemporary, Andrea del Castagno. Andrea, a contemporary of Uccello and Domenico, was the son of a peasant in the Mugello near Florence, and was employed as a lad to guard the flocks — “being set to do so by his uncle,” says Vasari, “because he was so quick and wide-awake, and so fierce that he knew how to look after not only his beasts but their pasture and everything else that concerned his interest.” We certainly find in Andrea's later work something of this character of being “quick” and “fierce” (*pronto e terribile*), together with an almost brutal realism, a coarseness of fibre, an insistence on sheer strength which seems to connect itself with his peasant origin. Yet after all there is blood and muscle and fibre within these figures of his within Sant'Apollonia: they contrast very noticeably with the tender reserve of Domenico, the graceful *naïveté* of Baldovinetti, the patient drudging science of Uccello; they form a new element in Florentine art of this period — and one which we should be very loth to lose.

We may pass over Vasari's pretty story of Andrea's first awakened interest in art, through seeing the country-side work of some journeyman painter — a story which may very probably possess some elements of fact; and we find him in those first years of struggle in Florence “poor and in bad health,” possessed of neither house nor bed within the city when he fills in the *catasto* of 1430. But his work progressed, his talents became recognized (as even Vasari fully admits), and he must in his later life have been quite comfortably off.

Typical of Andrea's best work are the frescoes in Sant' Apollonia at Florence, to which I have already alluded: painted originally for the Villa at Legnaia of Pandolfo Pandolfini, they were abandoned to neglect, and very fortunately rescued in part and transferred to the Museo Nazionale at Florence, and thence to their present home in the refectory of the suppressed convent of Sant' Apollonia (in the Via Venti-Sette Aprile).



EQUESTRIAN MONUMENT OF NICCOLO DA TOLENTINO.

Fresco by ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO.

(Cathedral of Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence



HIC OMNIBUS MEMINEO
PIETATIS NISI CLAVS TOLENT
EST INCTO EXHOREN EXERCITV

Here too is the artist's fine *Cenacolo*, which is full of power and character. I noted as especially vigorous in type the S. Andrew, who sits with upraised knife to the left of S. John, the finely drawn head of S. Peter, the Judas with thick black hair and black beard, who sits alone on the outside of the table where the Saviour is at supper with his disciples — a wonderful rendering this of the traitor, apparently studied from the life from some Hebrew model of Florence. The shadows in this painting have become very black and ugly, but I incline to think they may have been retouched; the handling of the drapery is firm and bold, the types carefully chosen throughout — heads and figures full of character and absolutely realistic.

The same vigour of treatment — a harshness which is sometimes almost brutal — appears in the damaged *Crucifixion* above, as well as in the *Christ emerging from the tomb* and the fluttering angels. But the latter is of course not to be compared with his grand *Crucifixion* of the Uffizi, to which I shall return later; and the main interest of Castagno's work at Sant' Apollonia centres in the figures from the Villa Pandolfini. These were painted originally upon a background imitating marble, and in an appropriate architectural setting which must have immensely enhanced their effect; as they are now, detached from their setting and fixed at intervals upon a bare wall, each figure has to be judged on its merits, and suffers in consequence. Yet even so they are full of character and individuality; they justify the biographer's account of our artist as "most daring in the action of his figures, and terrible (*terribile*) in the heads of his men and women, giving them a certain severity of aspect and that too with good drawing."

First and most characteristic of all here is *Filippo Spano*, his head uncovered, but otherwise in full armour: with an over-vest or surcoat of clear blue fringed with lace and bound by a golden girdle he stands erect upon his legs, which are straddling apart, with a splendid swagger as he bends the blade of his broad sword between his bare hands. Nothing could be more typical of the soldier of adventure, the victor of

the Turks (*relator victorie Theucrorum*); and here Andrea's love of physical force and vigour find appropriate expression, as they do to a lesser extent in his (next) figure of the famous Farinata degli Uberti (*sue patrie liberator*) — though here the turbaned head seems to me too large for the body and legs. But with his scholars — such as Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio — he is less successful : they are posed models, carefully studied, but absolutely wanting in life. And the same may be said, in most cases, of his women. Tamiris (*Thomir Tartara*) is a healthy well-formed fair-haired “contadina,” whom the artist has dressed in armour, and covered with a rich saffron robe, every fold and curve of which he has drawn most carefully : while the *Sibyl* next to her, with book and upturned finger, and the half length figure of *Queen Esther* have the same vigour of treatment, but fail to reach the convincing reality of his *Pippo Spano*.

We get Andrea, however, at his best in the magnificent *Crucifixion* of the Uffizi Gallery : this fine fresco forms a lunette, and is remarkably typical of our master. We get here clear away from the precise careful drawing of Domenico, or the dainty grace of Alessio to a master of far greater technical power : massive in their design, powerful in detailed drawing, in these figures of the *Crucifixion* the nudes are handled with entire mastery, and though the drapery has unfortunately sunk in we can still trace its strength of line.

“How shameful,” says Vasari, in one of his prosy introductions, “in a person otherwise excellent is the vice of envy... and how wicked and horrible a thing to seek, under the appearance of a feigned friendship, to extinguish in others not only their good repute and renown but even their life itself;” and after much more in the same vein he goes on to relate his story of “the accursed Andrea del Castagno — whose painting and drawing was, indeed, great and excellent, but much more was the rancour and envy which he bore to other painters.” Then, after relating how Andrea, when he was painting his great equestrian figure of Niccolo da Tolentino, pursued a boy, who shook his ladder as he passed, “*in tanta collera come bestial uomo che era*” as far as the Canto de’ Pazzi, next tells us that the

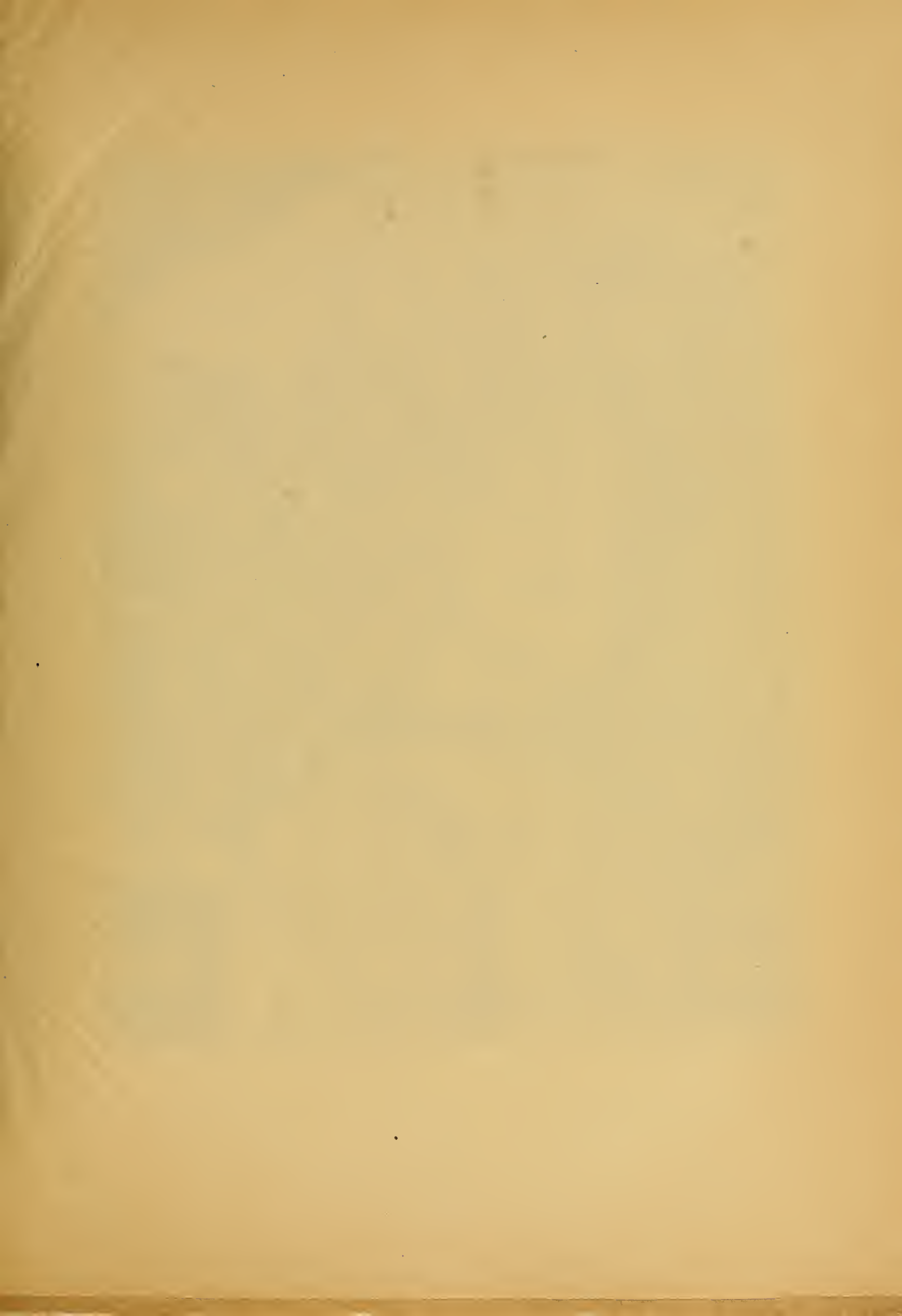
same artist was painting in the church of S. Maria Nuova beside Baldovinetti and Domenico Veneziano. Now Andrea, says Vasari, was filled with envy at the praise given to Domenico, but concealed his feelings so successfully that he gained Domenico's friendship — "so that every night they were together amusing themselves and serenading their lady-loves, in which Domenico always delighted; so that in his affection for Andrea he taught him the method of painting in oil, which was not yet known in Tuscany... Now one summer's night as was his wont, Domenico took his lute in hand, and went out of S. Maria Nuova, leaving Andrea alone in his chamber busy drawing; since this latter would not go out with him that night, saying that he had some drawings of importance on hand. Then as soon as Domenico had gone off alone to his amusement Andrea, unseen by any, slipped out and awaited him behind a corner; and when Domenico passed on his way home he fell upon him with a certain leaded stick (*con certi piombi*), and broke his lute and his stomach at the same time. Then, as it seemed to him he had not yet given him sufficient, with the same weapon he broke open his head; and then leaving him on the ground returned to S. Maria Nuova to his room, where he set himself to draw, just as when Domenico left him." Meanwhile the neighbours came to tell Andrea of the tragedy, "who running to where standing about Domenico could not be consoled or stayed from crying *Oimè* — my brother! *Oimè* — my brother!" Finally Domenico expired in his arms; nor was it ever known who had killed him — till Andrea on his death-bed confessed. This story, which completely blackened Andrea's memory, has in quite recent years been — I consider successfully, — disproved by Gaetano Milanesi's searching and brilliant criticism. It is an intellectual pleasure to follow up the careful line of argument, and the evidence on which this criticism is based, in his Commentary on the lives of Andrea del Castagno and of Domenico Veneziano. Here it may suffice to say that, just as this critic disposed of the suggestion that Domenico introduced oil painting into Florence, so he now shows that there was no sufficient reason for Andrea's alleged envy, since he was (as Vasari admits) himself a successful and

appreciated painter, with plenty of commissions at the time; and finally that, while later documentary evidence fixes Andrea's death for the 19th August in 1457, Domenico Veneziano himself is proved by the death register of Florence to have been buried on the 15th of May in 1461 — thus surviving his pitiless murderer by nearly four years! So that the whole story of the murder falls to the ground, and, after nearly five centuries, the research of a great critic has rescued the name of a no less great artist from unmerited reproach and ignominy.

Alessio Baldovinetti's name has already come before us in this part of my narrative; and, in fact, it would be impossible to complete our account of this special movement at Florence without including him as well as the Peselli. Alessio himself is an artist of exceptional interest, and it seems to me that Mr. Berenson scarcely does him justice when he finds in his "remaining works no trace of purely artistic feeling or interest;" yet we have in his *Virgin Enthroned* of the Uffizi, in his *Annunciation* (whose weak points we shall shortly notice) of that gallery, and above all in his untouched *Trinity* three paintings which place him on the same artistic level as his contemporary Domenico Veneziano, though he never reaches the power and grip of Castagno.

Where he excels Domenico, where he almost approaches Botticelli, is in his *naïveté*, his individual charm. In the *Annunciation*, which I have just mentioned, the Virgin stands upright within a *cortile* of very beautiful design: we see that she has been reading at an upright lectern, and her book, bound in crimson, lies on its lower shelf. But she turns her dainty head now, with a swing of her whole slim body, for the angel Gabriel, with arms folded, absolutely runs in to greet her. There is nothing, however, of the angelic in his type: he is simply a Florentine errand boy, who is in a hurry to deliver his commission and return to his "bottega." Behind these two a garden of well-kept flowers is bounded by a wall, behind which cypress and magnolia trees are defined against the clear blue sky with its foamy little banks of cloud.

What hurts the colour scheme is the insistent vermilion red, which



PORTRAIT OF THE YOUNG LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

(Detail from the "Journey of the Magi Kings.")

From the Fresco by BENOZZO GOZZOLI.

(Chapel of the Riccardi Palace, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



runs over the arch of the *cortile*, and reappears in the shoe and book of Madonna. Imagine, says Crowe of this painting, an Archangel in boots; but he adds — “the principal characteristic of this painting is its technical execution. Every detail is seen to be executed with admirable precision: the drawing is firm and clear, both in the general masses as well as the smallest details, for instance the fruit, flowers and other accessories. The painting shews, in fact, the effort which Vasari attributes to the Peselli and Baldovinetti to alter the old method of painting”—and to put themselves into line with the new path struck out by the Van Eycks. In Alessio's painting, next to this, of the *Virgin and Child with SS.*, we find closely similar handling. Here the drawing of the drapery, as with Domenico Veneziano, is precise and angular; here too a wall, — but this time of gold with a delightful pattern, — forms a background to these ten figures, eight of whom are male saints. Behind this wall (as in the *Annunciation*) cypress and palm trees are outlined against the blue sky, with just the same thin lines of hillocky clouds; and there is to be traced a similarity of type in the Virgin here with that recently given to the Louvre under Piero della Francesca's name — though far below this last in delicacy and beauty.

But perhaps one of the most valuable test works of our Alessio is his *Trinity*, in the Florence Academy, partly because this is a work of extreme beauty, and also because it has come down to us practically untouched. Here Alessio follows in his rendering Masaccio's treatment of this subject within S. Maria Novella, and also that of his contemporary Francesco di Pesello, called Pesellino, who has treated the same subject in his painting of the London National Gallery. On the subject of Pesello, Vasari's account is again at fault. There were in fact two painters of this name. The elder of these Giuliano d'Arrigo, known as Pesello, was born in 1367. He lived and laboured in the Giottesque period, but in 1390 was commissioned by Agnolo Gaddi to design a monument to Pietro Farnese and Giovanni Acuto (Sir John Hawkwood). He competed for the erection of the cupola of S. Maria del Fiore in 1410, and in 1420 was appointed as a sort of

understudy (*provveditore*) to Brunelleschi, a post which he held for several years.

When Pesello's son-in-law died in bad circumstances, the old painter took charge of his little grandson, who "came to live with him, and grew up to be a painter of fame, known as Pesellino." Vasari confounds the names, the relationship, the work of the two painters, and the confusion which he has created is all but inextricable at the present day. But Pesellino, of course, belonged entirely to another epoch of art; he is influenced by Uccello and del Castagno, and probably Vasari is right in saying that he imitated Fra Filippo.

The most important work which we know of Francesco di Pesello, that is to say of Pesellino, is the altar-piece representing the *Holy Trinity* which was at one time in Pistoja, in the church of S. Jacopo, and is now in the London National Gallery. Here the Eternal Father is represented as seated on the clouds surrounded by Cherubim and Seraphim, enclosed by a great golden circle which throws out rays. With his two hands he supports the two ends of the cross on which Jesus is hanging, at whose head is the dove with outspread wings — the symbol of the Holy Spirit. In the figure of the crucified Saviour is found that study of the anatomical forms and the modelling which we have found already in the *Christ crucified* of Andrea del Castagno's fresco (from the convent of the Angels at Florence); but it is only fair to add that Pesellino has used here forms which are less coarse, which might almost, in comparison, be called refined. The character, however, the physical type, the expression and actual contours of this *Christ crucified* resemble those of the *Christ crucified* which Baldovinetti painted, treating this very same subject of the Trinity for the church of Santa Trinità at Florence; "the which painting," says Crowe, "was painted by Baldovinetti in 1470, that is to say about thirteen years after Pesellino's death... Studying this work (of Pesellino's), which was completed in the year 1456, which was also the year of the painter's death, we come to find in it the first efforts towards the technical grasp of oil-painting in Florence of the Cinquecento,

as well as the careful study of the nude figure, of anatomy, and of nature in every manifestation of herself; and these qualities form together, we may say, the connecting link between the art of Domenico Veneziano, of Andrea del Castagno, and of Baldovinetti — an art which we shall see continued and carried further in the works of the Pollajuoli, of Verrocchio, and of Piero della Francesca." (Crowe.)

Pesellino has three "predelle" (*Nativity, Martyrdom of SS. Cosimo and Damiano*, and a *Miracle of S. Anthony*, of Padua, in the Florence Academy, and another "predella," *Story of S. Nicholas* in the Casa Buonarroti). The Doria Palace, Rome, has his "predella" of the *Story of S. Silvestro*, and I hear that Mrs. Gardner (Boston, Mass., U.S.A.) has two Cassone. Another "predella" is in the hands of Cav. Antonio Gelli at Florence. Of these we may take the Academy *Nativity* and *Martyrdoms* as very typical of Francesco, and may compare him here with Domenico Veneziano and Alessio in the neat finish of his drawing and cleanness of his colour. It has been quite recently found, as I understand, that tempera, used as a basis for oil painting, gives great clearness and permanency of colour; and it seems quite possible that the artists just named were advancing already in this direction.

In connection with these artists a point of criticism arises which is of considerable interest. Dr. Richard Muther, in a work just published in English, says : "About the same time that Mantegna resided in Florence a picture had arrived from the Netherlands before which to-day one stands astonished in the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova." He refers to the famous altar-piece by Hugo van der Goes, which had been commissioned at Bruges by Tommaso Portinari, the Medicean agent, for the Church just mentioned, and which is now in the Gallery of the Uffizi. To Dr. Muther, who has been tracing simultaneously the artistic progress of the Netherlands and the Florentines, the arrival of this really wonderful painting in Florence appears as an artistic revelation to the native school. "The whole further development of Florentine art indicates that, next to the visit of Mantegna, the appearance of this Flemish altar-piece was regarded as the

greatest artistic event of the decade between 1460 and 1470... Piero della Francesca must have had it in mind when he painted his Oxford *Madonna*, and the *Birth of Christ* and the *Santa Conversazione* in the Brera... Other adaptations may be seen in the works of Baldovinetti, Piero di Cosimo, Ghirlandajo, Lorenzo di Credi and Piero Pollajuoli, and it was under the impression of Goes's work that the Duke of Urbino summoned a Fleming, Justus van Ghent, to his court."

Alessio Baldovinetti has painted in the forecourt of the SS. Annunziata at Florence a fresco, now almost ruined, but in which we can still trace the design of a *Nativity* and the remains of a landscape background of wonderful beauty, showing in perspective a stretching view of a plain with a winding river and hamlets and towered "borghi" on the surrounding hills. In this painter Dr. Muther sees the influence of Van der Goes. "In fact the group of shepherds in this picture, painted in the forecourt of Santa Annunziata, leaves no doubt that he was familiar with Goes' altar-piece. Not only in his gleaming colour did he follow the refined Fleming. Some of his pictures, like the *Annunciation* (which I have described above) and the *Madonna* in the Duchâtel collection... characterize him as a delicate painter of women who transformed the feminine trend of Goes (which likewise ran through the works of Domenico Veneziano) into an almost affected grace." I have gone into this matter somewhat fully because it raises a critical point which is, I believe, quite new and extremely interesting; but I would add that, while admitting his suggestion, one feels that the learned German critic may be pushing his conclusions too far.

With Piero della Francesca especially this may be the case. The great painter of space and light was born, in 1420, in the Umbrian city of Borgo San Sepolchro, and came to Florence with Domenico Veneziano, after the latter left Perugia in 1438. It has been pointed out that when he saw the Portinari altar-piece he was twenty years the senior of its creator; and, though he may have learnt from it, it is difficult to conceive of a marked influence upon his later work.

Did my space permit, it would be a great temptation to linger here

PROFILE PORTRAIT OF A LADY.
From the Painting attributed to PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA.

(Poldo-Pezzoli Gallery, Milan.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



over the work of this interesting painter, who is such a valuable link in the chain of Florentine development at this period ; as it is I must treat him briefly here, and confine myself even with Baldovinetti to some account of that interesting *Trinity* of the Florence Academy, in which he followed Pesellino very closely.

Behind Christ Crucified, over whose head flutters the Dove, sits a giant God the Father, who supports with his two hands the arms of the Cross ; and all these three figures of the Trinity are enclosed in a "*mandorla*" of Alessio's favourite frothy hillocked clouds, out of which delicious cherub heads with rosy wings emerge. All of the old artist's charm and *naïveté* he has put into these delightful winged "putti ;" but most of all into those who, dressed in little coloured tunics tied in at the waist, fly about or kneel in adoration outside their swarming brethren in the *mandorla*. We may note that one with blue-black wings and folded arms (just like the *Gabriel* of the *Annunciation*) who kneels at the foot of the painting ; not Botticelli, in his most idyllic moments, nor even Buonfigli ever created anything more charming, more absolutely fresh. Two male Saints in monastic dress (namely S. Benedict and S. Anthony the hermit) kneel, one at each side of the painting, which is framed in a sort of curtain painted so as to form part of its original setting when it stood upon the high altar of S. Trinità at Florence. When it stood there in all its fresh beauty and charm "with those two angels who lifted the great curtain it must have appeared to the onlooker like a vision. It is certainly the most important work which we know of Alessio, when the painter was about forty-four years old, in full possession of his strength and already master of his art ; so that from this painting it is that we come to recognise Baldovinetti as one of the greatest Florentine craftsmen of his time."

Though it is true that the painting has suffered, has been rubbed in parts and lost its colour, it has not been, as far as I can see, in any way "restored" save to clear off the surface dirt, and is therefore all the more precious as evidence. We recognise, in fact, a distinct advance here upon the art of Pesellino in his London picture of this subject, in

drawing, in anatomy, in colour and technique ; and we see that the painter carried the art of Domenico Veneziano, of Castagno and the Peselli a step forward towards that which we shall come to later in the work of Verrocchio and the Pollajuoli.

But, before these, we have already noticed one artist who stands in advance of all his contemporaries. Piero della Francesca joined to the scientific tendency of the art of his day the highest imaginative qualities. In a sense one might say that he foreshadows Raffaello just as Signorelli precedes Michel Angelo — in the sense namely that he combines the Florentine science with something of the Umbrian mysticism and highly imaginative beauty. The angels in his London painting (*The Baptism of Christ*, National Gallery) have dropped suddenly down to earth, and gaze upon the baptism of Christ with open wondering eyes, imparting a fragrance and beauty of the courts of heaven into the quiet scene beneath the spreading trees ; in the grey morning light of that S. Sepolchro *Resurrection* the Christ rises from the tomb, emergent without effort, and carries our thoughts up from earth into the divine world of higher aspiration. And yet the other side of his character is strongly scientific. He studies with success perspective, the projection of shadows, the scheme of values ; he fills his works with light and atmosphere, and improves on the oil methods of the earlier Florentines, the Peselli, Baldovinetti, and his own master, Domenico Veneziano, with whom he had worked on the frescoes of S. Maria Nuova at Florence (1439) and (about 1450) at S. Maria di Loreto.

In Arezzo Piero is to be studied in his series of frescoes in the choir chapel of the Church of S. Francesco, where, in a remarkable series of pictures, he gives us the *Story of the Cross*. The series begins with the *Death of Adam* (where the nude figure, with his back turned to the spectator, and leaning on a staff, is worthy of Signorelli) and continues with the *Dream of Constantine*, an *Annunciation*, full of great dignity, a marvellous *Battle-Scene*, the *Reception of the Queen of Sheba* by Solomon, and, finally, the *Entry of Heraclius* into Jerusalem. In all these frescoes (which

I have described in detail elsewhere) we find combined with great imaginative grasp the most "careful realism, rendering of light and shadow, mastery of the nude figure, the facing out of the most difficult problems of perspective, anatomy, of gradation of light and tone."

Arezzo (where other frescoes attributed to him have been just discovered) is therefore no less than Borgo S. Sepolchro a place of pilgrimage for the student of Piero, whose work, too, in Urbino is to be noted. In his fresco in S. Francesco at Rimini "representing the lord of the city, Sigismondo Malatesta, kneeling before his patron saint, the wall is broken open, and the Duke is seen kneeling in an open space which, pervaded by delicate light, stretches into the infinite." In his beautiful *Birth of Christ* in the London Gallery the same problems of light and depth of space attract him, although here he gives us all his power of imaginative beauty in those wonderful angels, who have been compared to the painter Rossetti's maidens, and who "have come down from Heaven to greet the Madonna with song and with the music of mandolin and viol." Even in his portraits he will introduce a stretching landscape whose wide distance is bathed in light and air, as he has done in the Uffizi behind the profile portraits of Duke Federigo and his wife; and in the Brera Gallery is his fine altar-piece with this same Duke Federigo of Urbino kneeling beneath the enthroned Madonna, on whom saints and angels wait in adoration.

It is time for us now to leave this "King of Painting," who, though not a Florentine born, came strongly under Florentine influences, and to glance back at that city's political history. We saw in the last chapter Cosimo de' Medici re-established at Florence, his power increased after his return from exile, and attracting to himself most of the best culture of his age. When he died in his Villa at Careggi (in August of 1454) he had been for thirty years "at the head of the richest, most cultivated and powerful Republic which then existed... he had, like Pericles, enriched this new Athens with all the marvels of the arts." His great buildings — the convents of S. Marco, S. Lorenzo, of S. Girolamo, and the Badia at Fiesole, his own villas at Careggi, Caffagiuolo, Fiesole and Trebbio, and his Palace

in the Via Larga — we have already noticed : we have seen too how the great scholars of the Renaissance lived in his intimacy and enjoyed his liberal support, how first one and then another of the Florentine painters and sculptors, Donatello, Fra Filippo, Domenico Veneziano, and many others received from him his constant support and their best commissions.

Under his guidance Florence had surpassed every city of Italy as a centre of art and culture. “Here,” says Muther, “where Cosimo de’ Medici was at the head of the State, and where the Strozzi, Bardi, Rucellai, Tornabuoni, Pitti, and Pazzi sought by the patronage of art to emblazon recent coats of arms, there were such commissions for painting as were given nowhere else in the world. But Florence had also become the scientific centre of Italy, and the great scholars, anatomists, and mathematicians whom the Medici had summoned thither worked hand in hand with the artists.

“A scientific spirit pervaded art — the only spirit capable of solving all the purely technical problems which the century proposed. Simply because in Florence artists laboured who, more as scholars than as artists, dedicated themselves with fanatic eagerness to the solution of the different problems, and made it a life’s work to penetrate into the formative workshop of nature, could the painting of the Quattrocento make such rapid progress.”

At the same time, while in his own position in the city and in his public movements Cosimo was in fact a Prince, in his private life, in his dress and his conduct, he remained a simple citizen; content with the real power he never imitated the despots elsewhere in Italy, and by his good sense and moderation was a strong sane influence in the city’s tumultuous politics. In his later years he saw with regret the impetuous Luca Pitti commence the vast Palace which he never completed, and assume the airs of a master in Florence. His second son Giovanni de’ Medici, on whom he had set his hopes, had died in 1463; and his eldest son Piero appeared too delicate in health to take the reins of State.

THE ARMS OF FLORENCE.

By DEI DELLA ROBBIA.

(Church of Or San Michele, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.

The old man looking upon his declining family exclaimed "Alas! this house of mine is too great for so small a family" (*Questa e troppo grande casa per si poco famiglia*): he withdrew in these last years more and more from public life, and lived among his own inner circle of scholars, artists, men of thought and culture. Yet his great name remained a power in Florence; when he passed away she bade her Gonfaloniere, Niccolo Capponi, to inscribe upon his monument the proud title by which he has come down to posterity — the title of Cosimo *Pater Patriæ*, the "Father of his Country."





THE HISTORY OF
THE
CITY OF
NEW-YORK
FROM
THE
FIRST
SETTLEMENT
TO
THE
PRESENT
TIME



By
J. C. CROFT
Author of
"The History of the City of New-York"
and
"The History of the City of New-York"
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1850

THE BIRTH OF VENUS.
From the Painting by SANDRO BOTTICELLI.
(Uffizi Gallery, Florence.)
Photo Alinari, Florence.



CHAPTER III.

LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT.



IN the epoch which we have now reached with the death of Cosimo de' Medici the great days of Republican freedom in Italy were already past. Milan, the cradle of Italian liberty, had already succumbed to the despotism of the Sforza, who soon extended their power over Genoa; at Mantua the Gonzaghi had now established their sovereignty, at Ferrara the House of Este, at Bologna the Bentivoglio; and while Siena had sunk, through civil discords, far below her old position of commercial and political supremacy in 1300, Pisa had come to be dominated by Florence, and Florence herself had, as we have seen, fallen under the veiled despotism

of one family—that of the Medici. But, in spite of the political lassitude which evidently lay behind this general decay of liberty and growth of despotism through Italy, the old spirit of freedom was not dead : in art the story of Judith is at this time a frequent subject, in the study of the Humanities Brutus an inspiring figure ; it was the age of conspiracies in which, though the people often remained inert and indifferent, the bolder or the nobler spirits endeavoured to shake off this incubus that was slowly tightening its hold upon Italian life.

We have seen already that in Cosimo's later years the death of Giovanni de' Medici, the weak health of his brother Piero, the old age of Cosimo himself had caused the Medici to take a less directly prominent part in Florentine politics, into which the rich and ambitious Luca Pitti comes forward at this time as a leading figure. After Cosimo's death, in 1464, this situation became accentuated, and two years later (1466) came to a head in a determined effort to throw off the Medici leadership. The immediate question at issue was the continuance of the subsidy, which the Republic of Florence had been paying Francesco Sforza, to his son and successor Galeazzo. Cosimo de' Medici had, as we have seen, favoured from the first the Sforza despotism at Milan, which suited his plans better than to have a Republic as neighbour; and Piero now supported strongly the claims to a subsidy of Galeazzo, which were opposed no less strongly by the Republican party in Florence. Seeking for an outside support this party allied themselves with Borso d'Este of Modena; and when Piero returned to Florence, carried in his litter to his palace in the Via Larga, with his young son Lorenzo riding beside him, he found his own palace full of his armed supporters, and on the other side the Gonfaloniere Soderini, with three companies of German knights, in arms in the quarter of S. Spirito.

Had Luca Pitti at that moment stood by his friends, and acted promptly, he might have driven the Medici from the city, and, perhaps, won it for himself. But Piero had already entered into secret negotiations with him, offering the Medici alliance; and when his friends approached him they

PORTRAITS OF LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT AND THREE MEMBERS
OF THE SASSETTI FAMILY.

From the Fresco by DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO.

(Church of the Trinity, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



found him disinclined to take any action, giving as his reason his respect for the memory of Cosimo. A truce was agreed to, at the suggestion of Diotisalvi Neroni, between the opposing parties : but, in the meantime, the Medici had increased their armed strength, and Piero, contrary to his promise, returned to the old device of a "balia." The Piazza was guarded by his armed adherents, and under these conditions eight of his supporters were elected to supreme power; Diotisalvi Neroni, Soderini, the Acciajoli and others of the Republican leaders were banished; the Medici supremacy was once more established, and Luca Pitti, though himself spared, fell into complete political insignificance. He was detested by his former friends for having betrayed them in their hour of need, and for having (it was even hinted) handed over to Piero the list of his enemies' names. The vast Palace which he had begun, and could not now afford the means to finish, and which still bears his name, is a fitting emblem of his ruined career....

But, though the Medici were still dominant, Florence could not escape the feeling of political unrest which pervaded Italy at this period, when the memories—and in Florence herself even the forms—of liberty survived, though her substance was lost; but when (as in modern Russia) the impulse towards freedom came rather from the cultivated classes, the "intellectuals," than from the people, who seemed disposed to accept the existing situation. We see an example of this in the little town of Prato four years later (1470). Here Bernardo Nardi, one of the Florentine exiles who had been driven out by Piero de' Medici, surprised the city gate, arrested the Florentine Podestà, and traversed the streets calling on the people to rise for liberty; but he found no support from the public; and the friends of the Medici, seeing him left alone, surrounded him and led him to Florence. He was there beheaded, with six of his partisans; and many others of them were hanged at Prato.

Yet the severe and merciless reprisals, which invariably followed any effort of political change, did not check this spirit of discontent : we have an example at this time at Ferrara (1476), when Niccolo d'Este

sought to recover the throne, another at Genoa, and yet another, which is of much closer interest to our subject, at Milan.

Galeazzo Sforza, Duke of Milan, had come to visit Florence in 1471, and had been received by Lorenzo de' Medici in his Palace of the Via Larga : the portrait of Galeazzo by Piero Pollajuolo, now in the Uffizi Gallery, belongs very probably to the period of this visit. A sort of insolent pride is apparent in the whole attitude and expression of this young man, with his hooked nose and strong cruel face, dressed in a close fitting jacket of blue embroidered with the "fleur-de-lys." His pomp and extravagance astonished the Florentine citizens, still accustomed to a certain Republican sobriety of dress and manners; twelve waggons' load of draperies of gold and silk for the use of his Duchess Bona had been carried by mules across the Appenines; we hear of chamberlains, pages, men-at-arms and guards, horses, falcons, esquires robed in cloth of gold and silver; and it was estimated that his escort was not less than two thousand persons upon horseback, and that his expenses for this princely visit amounted to 200,000 golden florins.

Perhaps some remembrance of this display has found its way into Benozzo's delightful fresco of the *Adoration of the Magi* within the Chapel of the Medici Palace, in which Lorenzo himself appears as the younger of the kings : but, while Lorenzo could not vie with the Duke of Milan in lavish ostentation, he could shew him among his own intimates the greatest scholars of Europe at that period, and in the palaces and churches of Florence the finest masterpieces of Italian art, even then being produced under his appreciative patronage; and he had no reason to fear this comparison.

The young Duke was, in fact, a despot of the type of the worst of his Visconti predecessors, and was hated equally by the Genoese and by his own subjects at Milan. His sensual excesses were notorious; the women whom he had seized for his own pleasure from the best families of Milan he abandoned afterwards to his guards, and made an open boast of their disgrace. It was this conduct which led directly to his sudden and terrible end.

MONUMENT OF BARTOLOMMEO COLLEONI.

By ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO.

(Campo of S. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



Carlo Visconti and Girolamo Olgiati were Milanese youths of good descent, who were united in close friendship with Andrea Lampugnani, whom Duke Galeazzo had unjustly despoiled of the Abbey of Miramondo; and all three were scholars of the Bolognese Cola de' Montani, who, in the study of the ancient writers of Greece and Rome, had filled their minds with a lofty ideal of Republican freedom. Add to this the sense of private wrong, and we have the elements at work which were to be the Milanese despot's undoing; and Olgiati, who seems to have been a fine personality and noble character, had this in full. I have alluded already to Galeazzo's excesses, many of the details of which cannot be described; and among the tyrant's victims had been Girolamo Olgiati's beloved sister.

It is evident from his own confession that these three young men entered upon their plot in a high state of mental exaltation, and an almost religious fervour. Olgiati himself enters the ancient temple of S. Ambrose at Milan, and—"throwing myself at the feet of that holy bishop I addressed to him this prayer. 'Great Saint Ambrose, guardian of this city, Hope and Protector of the people of Milan, if this oath which thy fellow-citizens, thine own children have made to cast forth from our midst this Tyranny, this nest of impurity and monstrous lust is worthy of thine approval, let us not lack thy favour in the midst of these many risks and perils to which we are about to expose ourselves in the liberation of our country.'"

In the same spirit the three conspirators took the sacrament together in the church of S. Stephen on the morning of their fatal deed, and together awaited the Duke's arrival in that very same church.

It was Christmas morning of 1476. Strange warnings and presentiments of danger had filled Galeazzo's mind that day,—and it had been unwillingly that he had left his palace with the ambassadors of Ferrara and of Mantua. As he entered the church Lampugnani approached him, forcing his way through the crowd, and dropped before him on one knee as if to present a petition: then with his right hand he suddenly struck the Duke upwards in the stomach, and at the same moment Olgiati

struck him in the breast, and Visconti through the shoulder and back. The Sforza fell forward dead into the arms of the two ambassadors, with one cry of "Oh God!"

It had been all so sudden that these last had not realized what had happened. Then a great tumult arose; men drew forth their swords, Lampugnani, seeking to escape from the church, became entangled in the dresses of a group of kneeling women, fell forward, and was killed at that moment by an esquire of the dead Duke; Visconti too was seized, and slain by one of the guards,—and Olgiati alone escaped. He took refuge in a friend's house, but, even as he was preparing (as he tells us) to go forth into the streets, and call upon the people to rise for liberty, he heard the rabble without dragging the mangled body of Lampugnani through the street; the sound filled him with horror, and he recognized that he was lost.

He was seized, and, in the manner of those times, was submitted to the most horrible tortures; but the confession, which he wrote amidst these sufferings, is full of dignity and of a firm belief in the justice of his cause. "I only ask"—he wrote at its conclusion—"that enough strength may be left to this wretched body of mine that I may be able to make ready my soul to receive the last rites of the church, and undergo the fate that is reserved for me." That fate was to have his flesh torn from his body with red-hot pincers; yet even amid these horrors, as the priest at his side used the conventional exhortation to repentance, he had strength to reply—"Instead of repenting if I should come to life again ten times to go again through these same torments I would not hesitate to consecrate myself to such a noble purpose!" One cry of agony escaped him as the savage executioner tore from his breast the living flesh; but a moment later he recovered himself to cry aloud in Latin,—*"My death is bitter, but my fame shall be eternal—Mors acerba, fama perpetua! Stabit vetus memoria facti!"* Girolamo Olgiati when he perished was twenty-two years of age.

One might think that this horrible punishment which was meted out

PORTRAIT BUST OF GIULIANO DE' MEDICI.

By a Florentine Artist of the Fifteenth Century.

(The National Museum, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



to conspirators would have secured the despot; it is, however, a commonplace of statutory experience that the severity of the code has never decreased the amount of crime; and the condition of Florence at this time was full of the elements of danger. To the *fuor-usciti*, the exiles of 1434, who had been driven from the city by Cosimo, were now added those of 1466, who had been exiled by Piero de' Medici.

Italy was filled by these banished Florentines, men of the highest position in commerce and learning; and now, at Venice, the earlier and later exiles joined forces to make a determined effort to recover their country. They had money at their disposal, they had the secret support of Venice, and in 1467 they had raised an army, and placed at its head the great Condottiere Bartolommeo Colleoni; but, though he entered Tuscany with his forces, the people of Florence remained indifferent or contented, and nothing was achieved.

Pietro's health had become so bad that he left the management of affairs to five subordinates or *accoppiatori*, Tommaso Soderini, Andrea de' Pazzi, Luigi Guicciardini, Matteo Palmieri and Pietro Minerbetti; but he himself perceived with regret at the time of his death (1469) their misuse of these powers. Meanwhile the two younger Medici, Pietro's children, Lorenzo and Giuliano, were too young to take charge of the government, and found more interest in their *feste* and tournaments (*tornei*)—such as were those which celebrated Lorenzo's marriage with Clarice Orsini : the real power remained at this time with the five *accoppiatori*.

As at Milan so at Florence a private wrong was sufficient to set the elements of discord ablaze. One of the oldest and most famous families in Florence was that of the Pazzi : they had intermarried with the Medici, their riches and political influence were immense : Andrea de' Pazzi had, in fact, been one of the five *accoppiatori*, but was now dead; and Lorenzo de' Medici, from jealousy, as it seems, of their influence, set himself deliberately to depress their power, and to prevent any of the nine Pazzi who were eligible for the "Signoria" from holding any political office. The Medici even passed a special law which prevented one of the Pazzi

from inheriting his father-in-law's immense fortune : furious at this persecution Francesco de' Pazzi left Florence, and established himself at Rome, where he became the banker of Pope Sixtus IV.

He found there one who hated the Medici almost as bitterly as himself : the Pope promised his aid in a conspiracy, which was to give back liberty to Florence by the lives of the two younger Medici. Jacopo de' Pazzi, the head of that family, finding the Pope's approval secured, entered into the plot ; and Francesco Salviati — whom the Pope had appointed to the Archbishopric of Pisa, but whom the Medici had prevented from entering upon his appointment — threw himself into it with equal zest to that of the Pazzi themselves. It was considered necessary that both the Medici should be struck down at once, since if either survived he might become his brother's avenger ; and the *fête* given by Jacopo de' Pazzi to the young Cardinal Riario at Montughi near Florence was the moment chosen. But Giuliano de' Medici was neither at this *fiesta* nor at that given by Lorenzo at Fiesole : it was then resolved to delay the attack till the Cardinal Riario should perform mass in the Cathedral of Florence, when both the brothers would be certain to be present. But here a fresh difficulty presented itself. Montesecco, a captain of adventure who had undertaken to kill Lorenzo, had no objection to murder in itself, but felt conscientious scruples about performing it within a church ; and, finally, two priests were induced to take his place, Antonio da Volterra and another, whose professional duties made them feel more at home in these surroundings.

On the fatal morning (April 26, 1478) all the conspirators were at their posts. The mass was commenced, but Giuliano de' Medici had not arrived ; and Francesco de' Pazzi went with Bandini to seek him and to tell him that he must come. He returned with them, in fact, to the Cathedral ; and there, as he knelt at the altar where the priest was elevating the Host, Bandini struck him with his dagger in the heart, while, as he fell to the ground, Francesco de' Pazzi struck him repeatedly with such fury that he wounded himself in the thigh. At the same time

the two priests whom I have mentioned had attacked Lorenzo de' Medici, but he escaped with a slight wound in the neck, and took refuge in the Sacristy, where Angelo Poliziano quickly barred the door. In the meantime the friends of the Medici had drawn their swords, and formed a guard before the sacristy door; and the conspirators had turned their attention to securing the Palace of the Signory. At this moment it was the Archbishop Salviati entered the Palace, saying that he wished to speak to the Gonfaloniere, while his fellows in the plot were concealed without.

But the Gonfaloniere at this time was that very Cesare Petrucci who had been recently surprised at Prato by Bernardo Nardi : the evident excitement of Salviati aroused his suspicion (for he had not yet forgotten his recent lesson), and he arrested both the Archbishop and all who were following him.

Landucci's narrative is here so vivid that no account of mine could better it, or add to its note of actuality. "At this same time" (he has just described the death of Giuliano and escape of Lorenzo into the Sacristy) "the Bishop de' Salviati, with Jacopo di Messer Poggio and two of his relations who had also the name of Jacopo went to the Palace, along with certain priests, pretending that he wished to speak to the Signory, and spoke with the Gonfaloniere, and as he spoke showed himself somewhat frightened. The Gonfaloniere suspected treason and fastening the doors on all sides rang the great bell to summon the people to "Parlamento" (*sonare a Parlamento*). And between the clamour that came from S. Maria del Fiore, where Giuliano now lay dead, and the sound of the great bell of the Palace all the city was at once up in arms. And Lorenzo de' Medici was brought back home to his own house."

"And at this same time Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi hurried on horseback towards the Piazza de' Signori, crying aloud '*Popolo e Libertà*,' to seize the Palace; and since the Bishop had not succeeded in seizing the Palace, he could not gain admission. Then he went towards his own house, and was advised to secure his escape (*se n'andassi con Dio*), and fled by

the Porta alla Croce, together with many footmen and with Andrea de' Pazzi.

“By this time all the city was in arms, in the Piazza or at the house of Lorenzo de' Medici. And dead in the Piazza lay a whole company (*brigata*) of those who had taken part in the conspiracy, and had been hurled from the windows of the Palace of the Signori still alive : among the others a priest of the Bishop's following lay dead in the Piazza, and was cut in four pieces (*isquartato*) and his head taken off, and for the whole day that same head was carried on a lance throughout Florence, and his torn legs and quarter of his body in front with an arm, born aloft upon a pike through the whole city by men crying all the time aloud — Death to the traitors! (*Muoino i traditori!*)

“On that same evening the Cardinal” (Riario, the nephew of the Pope) “was led into the Palace, and scarcely was his life preserved in the going there, and all his company taken, so that not one of them escaped. The Bishop remained captured in the Palace along with all the others. And that evening they hung Jacopo di Messer Poggio from the windows of the Palace of the Signori, and with him the Bishop of Pisa (Salviati), and Franceschino de' Pazzi naked, and about twenty men between the Palace of the Signori and of the Podestà and of the Capitano, all hung from the windows. Then the next day, namely the 27th, they hung Jacopo Salviati, son-in-law of Filippo Tornabuoni, and the other Jacopo Salviati also from the windows, and many others of the household of the Cardinal and of the Bishop.

“And the following 28th day of April, 1478, Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi was taken, being captured at Falterona with nine of his footmen, namely those from Castagno and others ; and at Belforte too Renato de' Pazzi was taken. And on that same evening of the 28th day of April, about the 23rd hour, was hung from the windows of the Palace of the Signory near the *ringhiera* (balcony) Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi, and with him Renato de' Pazzi and many of their footmen, in such numbers that for these three days were (hung) more than seventy men.... and on the 29th

PIERO DE' MEDICI.

By MINO DA FIESOLE.

(National Museum of Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



day of the month aforesaid things became a little quieter and more settled, without any more bloodshed; but even then men's hearts were mazed (*ismarriti*) with terror."

This was that famous conspiracy of the Pazzi : which was perhaps the greatest risk which the Medici ever ran, so wide-spread was it, so strong in its support both within the city and without; but the conspirators, belonging to the Church and the rich and influential families of Florence, forgot something which the people of Florence had never forgotten,—namely, that the Medici had been their friends when they made their unsuccessful effort towards complete political enfranchisement (precisely one century earlier) on the 22nd of July in 1378. Therefore it is that I have described earlier in this volume that date as one of the cardinal points in Florentine history, for without it we should be at a loss to explain the complete and immediate failure of this widespread and well-organized conspiracy of the Pazzi : and thus we recognize that the savage scenes of retaliation which I have just described from the journal of an eye-witness (who closes his account with a positive shudder!) were not merely the vengeance of a party, but of a people on its oppressors. Beneath the external polish afforded by art, scholarship, even luxury of life and riches there remained under the surface, in this Florence of 1478, the intense party hatreds and savage passions of the Florence of 1300.

Though Lorenzo was now safe, Giuliano buried with all honour within S. Lorenzo (on the 30th April), and the new Signory installed on May 1st, the day following, the proscriptions still continued, and for many days succeeding our diarist notes down some new victim : there was, in fact, as a stimulant to this civil fury,—just as in Paris three centuries later under the Terror,—great fear at this time of invasion from without.

Pope Sixtus IV., enraged at the failure of his plot, launched his excommunication against the Florentines, unless, within a month from the first of June, both Lorenzo, the Gonfaloniere, priors, and "eight of the balia" were all handed over to the ecclesiastical tribunals : his special complaint

here was their summary execution of Archbishop Salviati. "Oh grief! Oh unheard of crime! They even laid violent hands upon an Archbishop, and upon the Lord's own day (on Sunday) hung him publicly from the windows of their palace." At the same time he proclaimed openly the league, which he had formed against Florence with King Ferdinand of Naples and the Republic of Siena. Federigo of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, whose profile portrait by Piero della Francesca now hangs within the gallery of the Uffizi beside that of his wife Battista Sforza, was placed at the head of the armies of the league: Federigo was one of the greatest Condottieri of his time, and was careful to declare war, not against Florence, but against Lorenzo personally.

But Florence at this juncture, though threatened by the thunders of Rome and the armies which were invading her territory, was faithful to the Medici: there was great fear in the city of fresh disturbance, "and," says Landucci, "by day and night a sheriff (Bargiello) went through the city, and all night long the citizens' guards. Nor did any, whether great or small, dare to go out after one o'clock; and at that time not a jest or sound of mirth was heard in the city by night, and no man carried arms". Even the body of poor Jacopo de' Pazzi was not left in peace in consecrated ground, for "on the 15th. day of May 1478, Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi was disinterred from Sante Croce, and buried along the walls of Florence between the Porta alla Croce and the Porta alla Giustizia under the soil (*drento*). And on the 17th of May, 1478, about the twentieth hour the street boys dug him up again, and with a piece of string that he had about his neck dragged him through the whole of Florence: and when they had reached the door of his own house they tied the rope to the bell of the entrance, and pulled it, crying 'Knock at your door!' — and so made jest of it through the city; and at the last, tiring of their sport, they went to the Ponte a Rubaconte, and threw the body into the Arno. And as it went floating down to below Florence, often appearing above the water, the bridges were crowded with townsfolk waiting to see it pass.... And there were some

who said they had seen it pass between the bridges at Pisa, and that it was still floating on the surface."

It seems strange to think that the same city which saw these horrible scenes of party vengeance (scenes which equal in their ferocity those of the Terror in Paris) was the same which only a few years earlier had been the home of that exquisite religious art of Fra Angelico, whose spirituality seems unsoiled by any worldly thought. Fra Angelico's dates are 1387-1455 — his last works therefore falling within our period. Who does not know the angels making music around his figures of Madonna and the Christ Child in the Uffizi Gallery, where his work may be compared with the great *ancona* of his contemporary, Don Lorenzo Monaco? And the work of Beato Angelico is well represented in the Florence Academy of Fine Arts. Here is his fine *Deposition*—a subject which he repeats, on a smaller scale but with as much beauty of detail, in his delightful series here of small panels filled with scenes from the life of Christ; and if we concentrate our attention upon this series we shall see how the Frate was really a fine master of his craft, showing in this smaller *Deposition* excellent composition and rendering of distance, in the *Baptism of Christ* fairly correct handling in the nude, and throughout good qualities of design.

In fact what divides off Fra Angelico from those contemporaries whose work we have just analysed — Pesellino, Baldovinetti, Castagno and Veneziano — is not that he was indifferent to the technique, which was to them of such overpowering interest, but that with him the purely spiritual conception remains predominant.

We realize this in his *Last Judgment* of the Florentine Academy, in which the damned, when they are not grotesque visions of bogey-land, have been imported wholesale (the good Frate's imagination evidently failing him in this subject) from earlier Giottesque renderings, but where the vision of the Blessed—who embrace and dance, holding hands within the fresh flower-strewn meadows of Paradise—is a painting unique in its sentiment and entirely satisfying. Vasari says of this delightful creation—

“For the church of the monks of the Angels (the convent *degli Angioli*) he made a *Paradise* and *Inferno* of small figures, in the which with great care he made the blessed most beautiful, and full of rejoicing and heavenly gladness; and the damned made ready for the pains of Hell in various degrees of misery; but the Blessed are seen to enter in a heavenly dance (*celestemente ballando*) by the gate of Paradise.”

Still more does he reach the highest level of spiritual art in those wonderful frescoes of his own Convent of S. Marco, some of which breathe the very spirit of abnegation, of devotion, and of prayer. Here his great fresco of the *Crucifixion* is one of his finest creations. Christ crucified has on his either side the two thieves; beneath are the holy women and groups of saintly spectators, while in the tier below a wonderful series of roundels holds the illustrious of the Dominican order—monks, Cardinals, and even Popes—with, in the centre, S. Dominic himself. Above the Christ is his title *Jesus Nazareus rex Judæorum* in Latin, Greek and Hebrew; and Fra Angelico has excelled himself in the spectators of Christ's suffering.

Not perhaps in the three Maries—for the Virgin who is meant to be sinking down gives no impression of weight upon the two figures who support her, and the Magdalen who kneels before her seems to me quite out of drawing, the torso too long from the neck to the hips; but take the figure of S. Dominic, who kneels before the cross, or again that wonderful group beside S. Laurence, or, yet again, the group of monastic figures who balance these to the left of the Christ. Into these figures he has translated his own emotion; he has painted them, as Vasari said, when his own cheeks were wet with tears. And as we turn from this *Crucifixion* to go upstairs into the convent this feeling of intimate sympathy is only strengthened.

Where shall we find more supreme humility than in his Mary, who, at the very entrance from the staircase, waits to meet us as she receives the Angel's salutation! Where more passion of piety than in the S. Dominic near this last, who clasps the foot of his Saviour's cross! And what

THE ANNUNCIATION.

Fac-simile in colours.

By BEATO ANGELICO.

(Consent of S. Marco, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



UNGENSINTACTE CUIA VENERE ANTE FIGURAM PRUTER ENDO CAVE NE SEATVR AVE

majesty in the *Transfigured Christ*, who rises to Heaven, robed in white, with extended arms! Through each little cell we may follow the Frate here—for each he sought to adorn with its own scene from Christ's story. In the passage without he had painted the *Virgin enthroned* with eight Saints beside her, some of whom are of a most refined type of beauty; and for his own little cell, overlooking the *cortile*, he chose the scene of *Christ Betrayed* in the garden.

Technically, however, Fra Angelico is perhaps at his highest level in that delightful Capella di Niccolo V. within the Vatican (one of his latest commissions), which is entirely filled with his frescoes from floor to ceiling. His subject is here the *Lives of S. Stephen and S. Lawrence*, and to be noticed especially is the fine scene of *St. Stephen's preaching*. It is true that in the stoning of this first Martyr the Frate fails to attain any reality of action and movement, any dramatic rendering; but not so in the *Martyrdom of S. Lawrence*, which is just beneath this last.

Here not only is the vigorous movement of the executioners most effectively rendered (one of them we may note especially, who shields his face from the hot flames), but behind them the fine Renaissance *cortile* claims our attention, with its marble figures not unlike those in Botticelli's *Calumny of Apelles*.

In fact the whole series of the *Story of S. Lawrence* shews Fra Angelico's pictorial powers to their full advantage—notably in the *Consecration of S. Lawrence* by Pope Sixtus II. (where the Pope's portrait is taken from Nicholas V.), and again where the same *Pope gives money and food to the poor*; for in all these scenes the grouping of the figures and spacing of the composition is admirable throughout, and the architecture introduced of the purest early Renaissance. Sometimes a hint of a contemporary influence appears—as when Alessio Baldovinetti comes to our mind in the background of the scene where S. Lawrence preaches before Cæsar; and the twelve full-length Saints upon the ceiling (here *S. Bonaventura* is especially to be noted) are no less worthy of our Master's completed genius. For Pope Nicholas V. had brought Angelico from

Orvieto (where he was at work on a *Last Judgment* in the Duomo) to Rome to paint this exquisite little chapel; and it was at Rome that he died (1455), and was buried there in the church of the Minerva.

It is interesting to compare the Frate's work in the Uffizi with that of his pupil Benozzo Gozzoli, who has a delightful early *predella* near the Frate's fine altar-piece of *the Virgin enthroned* with angels making music in the frame around her. Technically we trace many points of resemblance, but here the sentiment is already different : with Angelico the spiritual feeling remains ever predominant, and all that Vasari tells us of his life only bears out the message of his paintings. "He was most humane and sober, and living in chastity kept free from worldly entanglements; being often wont to say that he who followed this art had need of quiet and a life free from cares; and he who depicts the works of Christ (*cose di Cristo*) should abide with Christ always.... He was able to have become rich, and took no heed of it; nay he was even wont to say that the true riches is to be content with little. He was able to have held high office among his monks or in the world without, and took no thought of this; affirming that he sought no other high fortune than to escape hell and to come near to heaven. With almost incredible sweetness of character to whosoever sought his work he was wont to say that if the Prior approved he would not fail them.... Never did he paint the Crucified without his cheeks being wet with tears; and the Saints that he painted have more of the manner and likeness of Saints than those of any other painter whatever. Whence in the faces and gestures of his figures is visible the goodness of his sincere and pure spirit in the Christian religion."

But with Benozzo Gozzoli the beauty of this actual living world has claimed a place within the Christian vision; in this he resembles his contemporary Gentile da Fabriano, who in his *Adoration of the Magi* within the Florence Accademia has treated the scene in the spirit of a mediæval legend, in which a pageant of processional splendour winds down the hillside, with mounted knights and pages, and servants who

bear hawks and hounds and crouching monkeys, while the younger *Rex Magus*, in his golden armour, seems like some "Prince Charmant" come to us out of fairyland. Obviously Benozzo, too, when he approached the same subject in the Palazzo Riccardi was as much carried away as Gentile by the romantic side of his subject, as much entranced by its decorative possibilities : yet his enjoyment of the scene is so naïf, so fresh that before these frescoes of the Medici Chapel we can wish for no other treatment. For here, too, the procession winds down the hill-side to meet us, with, in its front among the riders, his Medici patrons : Cosimo de' Medici upon a mule with richly embossed bridle and head-strap, and Piero his son riding on his left, and, among the crowd who follow behind, the artist's own face appearing, — clean-shaved and his eyes open and eager, with on his high cap the words *opus Benotii* (the work of Benozzo). Elsewhere we come upon Lorenzo himself, but Lorenzo still a youth, with long curling hair and clad in a rich tunic trimmed with fur, upon a white horse richly caparisoned, whom pages and spearmen accompany : or yet again the Palæologus, monarch of an Eastern Empire which was fading from his grasp, with something of tragedy in his sombre eyes ; and all these figures set within the most delightful landscape, where winding paths lead through the olive yards to distant castles, and great pines and cypresses are outlined clear and sharply against the sky.

Like the work of Gentile, or of Buonfigli at Perugia, or of the Venetian Carpaccio, it is a page of mediæval romance which we have turned over within this dainty little chapel of the Medici Palace ; a page which finds its completion in those angels who kneel beside the altar, where once stood Fra Lippo's altar-piece. For Benozzo has excelled himself in these angel faces who here rise, tier above tier, in praise and adoration of the God come down to men, — "waving rainbow-coloured wings above fair mortal faces ;" and what delights us in these is not any idealized beauty of type (such as it was given to Correggio to attain in his lost *Coronation*) but the precise dainty drawing, the painter's own joy in rich colour and glad young faces, and the freshness of his whole sentiment.

Benozzo must, of course, be studied also outside at Florence at Montefalco and San Gemignano, where I found his *Story of S. Augustine* entirely delightful in its detailed episodes, and in the Pisan Campo Santo, — a work this last of many years, within which he again introduced the portraits of his Medici patrons, with the scholars Ficino and Politian and other contemporaries. Here, at Pisa, in the upper tier of frescoes with their conventional nude figures of *Adam and Eve* we trace the hand of some weak Giottesque. But we find Benozzo, and Benozzo almost at his best, in the scene of *Noah's Vintage*, where young girls are carrying the grapes in wicker baskets, while the men beneath a pergola of vines clad only in white shirts are treading down the juicy fruit, and a small dog has entered upon a quarrel with two naked babies.

In the lower tier here is the scene of Noah's drunkenness, in which his sons have uncovered their inebriate father, while one of the young women (who has come down to posterity as "la vergognosa di Pisa") turns away in modesty, but yet ventures a glance from between her fingers. Benozzo loves these little touches of "genre," or of what he no doubt considered as pictorial humour : they are as much a part of his art as his delightful backgrounds, with palms and cypresses and winding streams and pointed hill-tops, or his many entrancing glimpses of early Renaissance architecture, of which a good example is the *cortile* in the next fresco. Or we may turn to the fresco next succeeding, if we wish an example of grouped contemporary portraiture : for here are his Medici patrons to the left of the unfinished tower, old Cosimo with his son Piero and his grandsons Lorenzo and Giuliano (whose death we have lately traced), and Angelo Politian who seems to be in charge of these younger members of the party. Masons are just swinging the great marble cornices into position ; and we feel here as if we were assisting at the building of one of Cosimo's convents or palatial villas.

It would take us too long to follow out all his pictured Bible story, of which we cannot help feeling here that it is too large a commission, of which our Benozzo gets (sometimes) a little tired. Let us pause

SAINT LAWRENCE ORDAINED DEACON BY POPE SIXTUS II.

By BEATO ANGELICO.

Chapel of Nicolas V., Vatican.

Photo Alinari, Florence.



therefore over two scenes only, in which our artist takes fresh breath, and recovers all his idyllic fancy. One of these must be the delightful *Visit of the three Angels to Abraham*.

Beautiful though these angels are (the head of one, alas! is lost), as well as the fine kneeling figure of the progenitor of the Jewish race, they are surpassed by the woman (?Hagar) robed in a loose white gown, with bared feet, who is going forth into the wilderness. But near this very lovely creation, in the scene where Sarah is thumping poor Hagar and pulling down her back hair, Benozzo thoroughly enjoys his momentary escape from serious subjects; and in the quarrel of two small boys (?Isaac and Ishmael) in the same panel, with a cat and dog dispute going on behind them, he is no less at his ease.

Then again let us pause before the scene of *Moses upon Sinai*, with at its side the people of Israel worshipping the Calf of Gold. Were the group of three young girls before their tent here carefully restored (as I believe might easily be done) it would, I think, be found one of the most beautiful subjects in the whole series.

For Benozzo delights to depict for us, within his scenes of sacred story, these exquisite visions of his own fancy, along with whole groups of his actual contemporaries—their portraits taken from the life: in this last he resembles many Florentine artists of his time, and notably among these Cosimo Roselli and Domenico Bigordi, called Ghirlandajo. The Sixtine Chapel of the Vatican, though dominated by the genius of Michelangelo, is at the same time an admirable illustration of a whole group of the Florentines of this very period:—Cosimo Roselli, Piero di Cosimo, Sandro Botticelli and Domenico Ghirlandajo—who worked here in fresco over the whole available wall-space in conjunction with the Umbrians, Perugino, Pinturicchio and Signorelli.

The value of their work here to our study is more especially that in almost every case it is extremely typical. For instance, Sandro Botticelli, who follows Pinturicchio (second fresco on left of altar) with his scenes from the story of Moses, shows here—in his scene where Moses

kills the Egyptian and drives the shepherds from the well — all that intense energy of movement which finds such attractive expression in his London *Nativity* and his *Calumny of Apelles* in the Uffizi Gallery; and, again, all his romantic element in the two fair-haired girls, clad in white, who watch their sheep beside the well. These last figures I consider as one of the most beautiful themes which Sandro has ever expressed — and one which may claim a place even beside his *Venus* or his *Primavera*.

Next to him Piero di Cosimo, — the creator of the quaint *Story of Perseus* (a series of several paintings) in the Uffizi Gallery, and the delightful *Death of Procris* in the London National Collection, — comes before us (with more than the success we might have expected) as a serious *frescante* in his *Destruction of Pharaoh and his Host in the Red Sea*. Where Piero fails however here is in his composition, which he abruptly breaks in the middle, placing on the one side Pharaoh and his host engulfed in the surging waves, on the other a group of tranquil spectators of the scene, many of whom are obviously contemporaries.

We find the last feature repeated in the next fresco, in which Cosimo Roselli treats the *Story of Moses* when he receives the Tables of the Law on Mount Sinai, or breaks them before the Golden Calf. “Simple and tranquil, in the costume of their time, they stand by as spectators or rather witnesses of the holy incident represented, and frequently occupy the principal places in the picture;” and here, in these upright figures of Cosimo’s fresco, who seem somewhat quaint and stiff in their mediæval costume, there is much that recalls the work of Gozzoli. But here too, — as almost always with this artist, — the landscape background is good; we notice this even in Cosimo’s *Adoration* of the Uffizi, which, poor in colour and clumsy in drawing, is redeemed by this one point.

As a figure artist he is obviously inferior to Botticelli, who comes before us here in the next fresco of the *Destruction of Korah, Dathan, and their company*, when he abandons himself to a vigour of rendering which recalls Signorelli’s famous frescoes in Orvieto Duomo. Yet again Sandro’s subject of *Christ’s Temptation*, though not attractive as a whole

and now very black in the shadows, has detailed scenes of great charm — such as are (on the right) the group of angels surrounding Christ, and (on the left) the fine group of portrait figures, which may depict some of the Medici of his time. To be noted among these is the figure in a red robe, and the younger man behind him with a dark and handsome face, full of character.

Lastly, after glancing at Cosimo Roselli's *Sermon on the Mount*, where the landscape is again good, and his *Last Supper*, we come to a fine and typically Florentine fresco in Domenico Ghirlandajo's *Calling of S. Peter*, — a noble creation, full of dignity, sound in drawing and magnificent in composition. This monumental fresco is the best of the Florentine work here, and compares even with Perugino's *Christ giving the keys to S. Peter* on the same wall; and thus, — through the work of Roselli, Botticelli, and Piero di Cosimo to the superb technical qualities of Ghirlandajo, — we have traversed in some measure within the Sixtine the Florentine fresco art of the half-century from 1450 to 1500.

There are, of course, other artists who are not included here, among them that interesting painter Filippino Lippi, son (and fellow pupil with Botticelli) of Fra Filippo. Filippino had continued and carried forward in a manner not unworthy of his predecessor, Masaccio, the frescoes of the Brancacci Chapel; and these, with his frescoes of the Strozzi Chapel in S. Maria Novella at Florence and of the Caraffa Chapel in S. Maria sopra Minerva at Rome, may be considered his most important work in fresco.

It is, however, in these frescoes of the Brancacci Chapel in the Carmine church at Florence that Filippino rises to his highest level; notably in his scenes of the *Martyrdom of S. Peter* and of *S. Paul before the Roman Proconsul*, as well as that of the *Resurrection* of the child, in which he probably completed Masaccio's earlier work. How delightful here is his drawing in the nude figure of the kneeling boy, how full of dignity and character these groups of attentive Florentines, — most (one might almost say all) of whom are obviously contemporary portraits, and among whom (in *S. Paul before the Proconsul*) appears Antonio Pollajuolo,

in profile with high red cap, beside Filippino himself (on his right) with full face turned towards us and shaggy brown hair, and (not improbably) Sandro Botticelli also, on the extreme left of this scene, with dark loose locks crowning a well-cut and very emotional and interesting face.

After his father's death, in 1469, Filippino's progress in art seems for a time to have been guided by Sandro; indeed we see the strongest evidence of this latter's influence in one of the most attractive of Filippino's Brancacci frescoes, that of the *Liberation of S. Peter*, where the white-robed angel has all the character of Sandro's art. Facing this is the *Visit of S. Paul to S. Peter in prison*, and above these two frescoes respectively are Masolino's nude *Adam and Eve*, and Masaccio's wonderful *Expulsion from Paradise*.

Indeed throughout these frescoes (for the element of Botticelli is here only incidental), in their breadth of technique, their tranquillity and quiet grandeur we recognise—in this spot which was hallowed by the memories of his art, which was (as Cellini says) the school of all the best later craftsmen—the influence of his great predecessor, Masaccio, over this younger Florentine.

When he gets away from this influence, when, as in his frescoes of the Strozzi Chapel of S. Maria Novella, he is left entirely to himself, to his own inspiration, we find a very different element asserting itself. Here, in the scenes of *S. John restoring to life Drusiana*, of the *Martyrdom* of that Saint (fresco above) in boiling oil, or of *S. Philip* (fresco opposite) *exorcising a dragon in Hierapolis*, Filippino seems to give way to his natural bias for what, three centuries later, became known as the "rococo;" but which here seems foreshadowed in exaggerated extravagance of movement and gesture, in scenes over-crowded with excited figures, and architecture running riot into meaningless ornament. And yet, with all this, we find often great beauty of colour and delightful detail in the drawing. Within the Florence galleries we find, in the Uffizi, two fine altar-pieces (an *Adoration of the Magi* and a *Virgin enthroned with SS.* dated the 22nd of February, 1485) by Filippino; in the Corsini

GROUP OF FOUR MALE SAINTS.

(Detail from "The Virgin and Child enthroned, with Saints.")

By BEATO ANGELICO.

(Convent of S. Marco, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



Gallery an early *Madonna with angels*, and in the Academy his emaciated *S. Mary of Egypt*, and scarcely less ascetic *S. John Baptist*; while the London National Gallery is exceptionally rich in his works—seven being here under his name, among which the *Virgin and Child with SS. Jerome and Dominic* and the *Adoring Angel* are especially to be noted.

But I prefer to devote my remaining space at his disposal to what is not only, to my mind, this artist's masterpiece, but also one of the most beautiful religious creations of the entire record of Florentine art. In one of the chapels of the Badia at Florence is Filippino's altar-piece of the *Vision of the Virgin to S. Bernard*. Already ascetic in type, but of singular refinement of beauty, Madonna enters from the right of the painting, attended by a group of angels, delightful alike in sentiment, in colour and drawing. To be noted especially is that angel, just beside the Virgin on her right, with an orange robe over a dress of blue, his hands clasped in adoration. With the rich colour of this whole group contrasts the white-robed S. Bernard and the rather cold grey of the background with its monastic figures. "In this most lovely religious picture," says Symonds, "Filippino comes into direct competition with Perugino (see the same subject at Munich) without suffering by the contrast. The type of Our Lady striven after by Botticelli and other masters.... seems more thoroughly attained by Filippino than by any of his fellow workers. She is a woman acquainted with grief and nowise distinguished by the radiance of her beauty among the daughters of earth. It is measureless love for the mother of his Lord that makes S. Bernard bow before her with eyes of wistful adoration and hushed reverence." This Madonna of the Badia is to be compared with that no less lovely Virgin painted by Filippino in fresco in a street of Prato. For both I have suggested that his mother Lucrezia, Fra Lippo's model, may have actually posed, or been in his mind during her later life. The type is that of a woman of great physical charm, which has been refined through suffering. In the Badia the composition is pyramidal, centering in these two figures of the Virgin and S. Bernard; and in a corner of

the painting appears the half-figure of the donor with clasped hands.

From Filippino we turn naturally to Fra Lippo's other pupil, Sandro Filipepi, called Botticelli : but, before taking into our survey this fascinating artist, I wish to devote a few words to his contemporary and fellow worker in the Sistine, Cosimo Roselli (1439-1507). We have already noticed in his Sistine Chapel frescoes the excellence of Cosimo's landscape backgrounds—a good quality which he shares with the earlier Baldovinetti, and with this latter's pupil, Verrocchio. With Cosimo, even where his presentment of the theme—as in his Uffizi *Adoration of the Magi*—is entirely commonplace, we often escape from the clumsy unimpressive figures into some vision behind them of a winding valley or low-lying mountain spurs. This will be found also in one of his best Uffizi paintings, that of the *Virgin and Child* with two angels; while typical of his colour, with its insistent reds and blues, is his *Coronation of the Virgin* of the same gallery.

In his *Saint Barbara* (a Florentine model who seems also to have posed for the Pollajuoli) who grasps her tower between two male Saints, within the Florentine Academy, we find Cosimo approaching his subject in the spirit of Neri de' Bicci, and with a lack of imagination which is almost overpowering. His rendering of *Santa Barbara* is as prosaic as that of Palma Vecchio is impressive and inspiring. He has none of the quaint fancy which carries us through the frequently weak drawing and composition of his assistant in the Sistine frescoes, Piero di Cosimo,—none of the imaginative grasp and wonderful sense of line of Botticelli, none of the sculptural drawing and frozen energy of the Pollajuoli; but he has a value for us as representing the average level of Florentine pictorial achievement in an age of genius, and in one fresco—his *Story of S. Filippo Benizzi* in the cloisters of the SS. Annunziata at Florence—he rises above that level in a work which places him beside Filippino and Botticelli in his own time, and not so far behind Baldovinetti, Pontorno and del Sarto, in those famous pictured cloisters.

The Pollajuoli—Antonio and Piero, to whom I have just alluded—

were among those Florentine artists in whom the sister arts were so blended as to affect their style in each. "Pollajuolo (Antonio) was a goldsmith, a painter and a worker in niello before he took to sculpture; and as his brother Piero worked with him on his designs it becomes very difficult to differentiate their work." What characterizes it even more than its scientific study of the nude and of anatomical form is its intensity—almost one might say its ferocity—of expression.

Take as an instance that famous *Hercules and Antæus* of the Uffizi, which is mentioned by both Addington Symonds and Bernhard Berenson as a typical example of this craftsman Antonio. The latter critic has described this wonderful little painting with all that precision of analysis which is his gift. "As you realize the suction of Hercules' grip on the earth, the swelling of his calves with the pressure that falls on them, the violent throwing back of his chest, the stifling force of his embrace; as you realize the supreme effort of Antæus, with one hand crushing down upon the head and the other tearing at the arm of Hercules, you feel as if a fountain of energy had sprung up at your feet and were playing through your veins."

The painting thus described is really a most highly finished little diptych, with for its one panel Hercules attacking the Hydra, and for the other his struggle with the earth-giant Antæus; and while in the Hydra painting what is extremely attractive is the delightful perspective of landscape with a winding river, in the Antæus we find all this marvellous rendering of muscular tension to which I have just alluded.

These Pollajuoli belong, in fact, to the same movement of scientific realism in Florentine art as those earlier men, whom we have been studying in the chapter previous; but where Uccello is absorbed in perspective, where Masaccio surrounds his noble figures with spacious atmosphere, where Veneziano or the Peselli interest themselves in the technical problems of painting, the Pollajuoli incline to approach their subject from the sculptor's point of view, and take evidently a keen interest in the problems afforded by the nude or draped form (but especially the nude as

more directly expressive) when under the tension of violent physical effort. And this although their more purely pictorial or religious works, such as the *SS. Eustachio, Giacomo and Vincenzo* of the Uffizi, the fine painting of the Arundel collection, and the less interesting *Cardinal* and *Christian Virtues* in the Uffizi Gallery—are themselves of considerable importance.

But when their subject is (let us say) *S. Sebastian*—as in the Pitti Palace or in the large painting of Antonio in the London National Gallery—it is obviously the careful rendering of the nude form, in the Saint himself or his executioners, and the observation of transient movement (note the archer in the London picture who is stooping to bend his cross-bow) which have fascinated the artist; and with what murderous intensity he has approached his subject in the famous engraving of naked men fighting duels in a wood. “The fiercest emotions of the Renaissance find expression in the clenched teeth, strained muscles, knotted brows and tense nerves depicted by Pollajuolo with eccentric energy. We seem to be assisting at some of those combats *a steccato chiuso* wherein Sixtus IV. delighted.... while the vigorous workmanship displays not only an enthusiasm for muscular anatomy, but a real sympathy with blood fury in the artist.” Not inappropriately Pollajuolo was selected to cast the monument in bronze of Sixtus IV., whose hand we have seen at work in the Pazzi conspiracy; and Antonio and Piero erected also that of his successor in the Papacy, Innocent VIII.

In their contemporary, Sandro Botticelli, we reach one of the most attractive—in some ways the most attractive—among all the masters of the Italian Revival. We have noticed him already, in speaking of Filippino, as having been a pupil of Fra Filippo; and probably to his contemporaries Sandro stood pretty much on Filippino’s level. At the same time, though he is not among the greatest in Italian art, he has qualities which set him quite above Filippino; and it is significant that Leonardo, who so rarely mentions contemporary painters, does mention “our Botticelli (*il nostro Botticelli*)” in his treatise upon painting.

After Pater, Symonds, Berenson, Gebhardt, and countless others it

THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI KINGS.

(Containing contemporary portraits of Cosimo, Piero, and Lorenzo de' Medici.)

From the Fresco by BENOZZO GOZZOLI.

(*Chapel of the Palazzo Riccardi, Florence.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



would be difficult to add any further stimulus to the interest this artist awakens. I shall only seek here to notice his leading works and their tendencies, leaving the political events which influenced his career to be treated more fully in a later chapter. The simplest division of Sandro Filipepi's works will be into his religious and his allegorical paintings, with which last I shall take his fresco work, his direct work in portraiture being strictly limited.

The Uffizi gallery at Florence contains what may be considered as his masterpiece in religious art, *The Coronation of Madonna*, and the scarcely less beautiful *Annunciation*; in the former of these the extraordinary beauty of type of the Virgin herself and the attendant angels is to be noted : in the latter the poise and swoop of the descending Gabriel—for movement is always one of Sandro's distinctive features. Note in the same room the swing of forward movement in his delightful little *Judith*, who steps towards us so fast that her old servant can scarce keep pace beside her : or again in the *Calumny of Apelles* the whirl of movement in the central group, and the statues that even seem to sway from this contagious excitement.

It would be an interesting study to follow out the subject of Sandro's models : this delightful *Judith*, for instance, seems to reappear in his Uffizi painting of *Fortezza* (Fortitude), and the *Fortezza* model has most certainly posed, in profile, for his *S. Catherine* of the Florence Academy. Not an interesting type at first sight, this fair-haired healthy-looking young woman of about twenty, with square face and snub nose somewhat broad at the point, a rather flat bosom and strong large hands and feet : but in Botticelli's hands even such a type as this becomes strangely fascinating.

This comes in part from the imaginative quality which enters into all his work, in part from his marvellous sense of line. That he felt the beauty of the nude very strongly is certain, and it is no less certain that he felt it from this latter point of view. *Fece molte tonde*—it was said of him — *e femmine ignude assai*; and, though many of these are lost, we may trace this feeling for the rhythm of line in his *Venus* with

her twining hair of gold (Uffizi), in the Graces who dance, linked arm-in-arm, within his *Primavera*, and in the nude figure of Truth in the *Calumny of Apelles*. This last beautiful picture, it may be noted here, was painted for Fabio Calvi, a gentleman of Florence, on Botticelli's return from Rome, where he had been busy on those wall paintings of the Sistine which I have already described : its subject is taken from a story in the "Dialogues" of Lucian.

Another side-light on Botticelli's work which it would be most interesting to work out in detail,—did my space here permit me to think of so doing—is his connection with the scholarship of his age, and its reaction upon his painting. We have seen his *Calumny* taken from Lucian, we trace in his *Primavera* the inspiration of Lucretius' great poem, in his *Birth of Venus* the influence of Poliziano's verse, and perhaps in the *Mars and Venus* (London National Gallery) that passionate epithalamium by the Magnificent—where Venus cries to her lover, "*Coperto m'ho di fior vermigli il petto*" : while Dante, whose visions of Heaven and Hell he had illustrated, remains for him (as M. Gebhardt says) *un missel de poésie..... parmi les plus chers souvenirs de sa vie.*"

The fact is that Sandro was himself a poet in feeling, and approached his text, whether the author were Dante or Politian, through the medium of his own emotion ; hence something intensely sensitive and almost sad, even in this revival within his paintings of the antique life, a bitter-sweet in his art which is strangely attractive, which makes one modern critic call this side of his work acutely intense and almost dolorous.

Temperamentally the man was a poet, and—even more still—a mystic. He might revel in the natural beauty of bodily forms, in the smooth sinuous limbs and meshes of golden hair of his Venus, in the glad angels who whirl above the fair young Madonna in his painting of the Florence Academy or who dance with very joy in the London *Nativity*, in the petals of his exquisitely drawn rose-leaves or the twined limbs of the Graces : but he could never rest there. He sought always to bring into his work the vision that haunted his soul.

Enjoying the patronage of the Medici, for whom he painted his *Pallas and Satyr* of the Pitti, and sharing to some extent in their culture, he yet came, in his later life, strongly under the influence of their chief opponent, Fra Girolamo Savonarola; and his life and art suffered, no less than that of Michelangelo later, from the claims of this divided impulse.

But Michelangelo possessed a stronger, more Titanic temperament than this dreamy mystic and most fascinating painter, Sandro Botticelli. Scarcely a greater contrast could be found to him than his contemporary, the Florentine painter and sculptor Andrea Verrocchio, who in his pupil Lorenzo's portrait looks out on us—a square, self-contained face, with black cap over his loose hair. But Andrea is in himself a great originative master, working like Orcagna before him—in both the formative arts, and was the teacher of both Lorenzo da Credi and the yet greater Leonardo da Vinci.

Before we analyse his work let us linger, for a moment only, over a Florentine artist of interest, who has some points of kinship in his art with Botticelli : to Francesco Botticini (1446-98) are now attributed the single figures of *S. Monica* and *S. Augustine* in the Florence Academy, and (by M. Berenson) the painting of the two *Archangels with Tobias*, which was formerly classed under Botticelli and is now named in the Gallery itself as School of Verrocchio : but yet again that exquisite Florentine painting of this period in the Pitti Palace, showing the Virgin adoring the baby Jesus in a garden, with the little St. John and angels beside her (the background here is very charming), is now attributed to this artist, who appeared also (*Madonna and Angels*) in my friend Mr. Willett's collection at Brighton, which has lately been sold.

The *SS. Augustine* and *Monica* are precise and careful in drawing, but hard and stiff in treatment : these single figures have certain affinities with the *Archangels and Tobias* in that gallery, but this last has strong evidence of Botticelli's influence; in fact the S. Michael re-appears, both in the type and design, in the large painting, attributed to Botticelli and certainly of his school, near it. We may assume that Botticini, working

as a contemporary of these masters, was certainly influenced by Verrocchio, and (if the *Archangels* painting is his) also to some extent by Botticelli : if the Pitti *Madonna and Angels* is also his then he takes a very high place in the Florentine school, but in this painting again we find differing features.

Important though Verrocchio's place is in the Florentine school, it seems to me less so from his own work than from the influence which he exerted on these—many of them younger—contemporaries. He had been born in 1435, and like Antonio Pollajuolo had his *bottega* in Florence as *orefice* (goldsmith); here he lived in the midst of that marvellously creative epoch in Florentine Art, and in sculpture he no doubt felt the supreme attraction of Donatello, while in painting, he seems to have followed Domenico Veneziano and perhaps Fra Filippo.

But Verrocchio was a man of all-round talents—"a goldsmith," says Vasari, "a master of perspective, a sculptor, engraver and musician,"—and thus fitted to be the teacher of the many-sided Leonardo. He was, besides, a creator of fresh forms in art; and the delightful babies of Lorenzo de' Medici and Leonardo may be traced back to that delicious *putto* of bronze embracing a dolphin, which Verrocchio made for Lorenzo de' Medici to adorn the Villa of the Magnificent at Careggi, and which is now in the centre of the first courtyard of the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence. For, like his contemporaries, the Pollajuoli, he worked as much in sculpture as in painting : modelled by his hand is the *David* of the Museo Nazionale (Florence), a rather bony and unattractive figure, though not without merit; his the *Incredulity of S. Thomas* at Orsammichele, in which he sought to rival the art of Donatello; and to his design that noble equestrian statue at Venice of the Condottieri Coleoni—who led the army of the exiles against Florence, and who seems here still to carry with him the tramp of armies and the beat of drums—is due, though it was completed after his death by Leopardi.

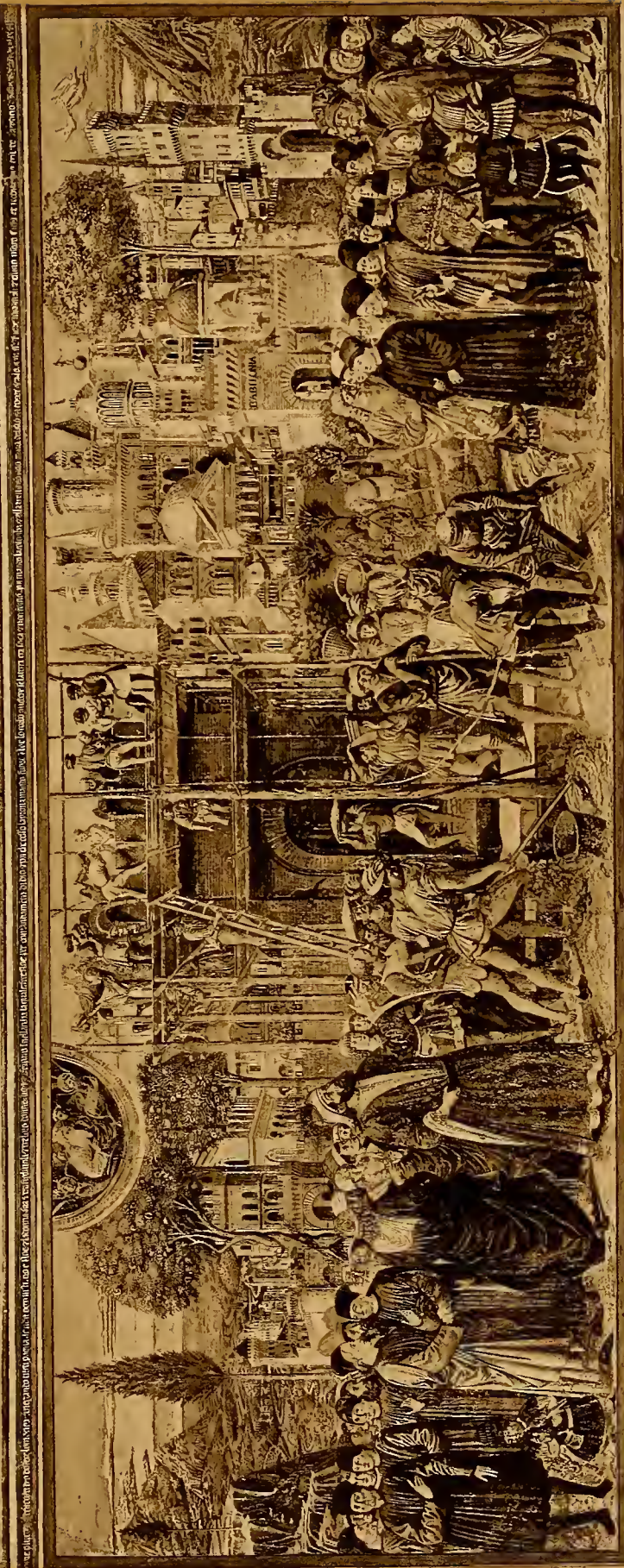
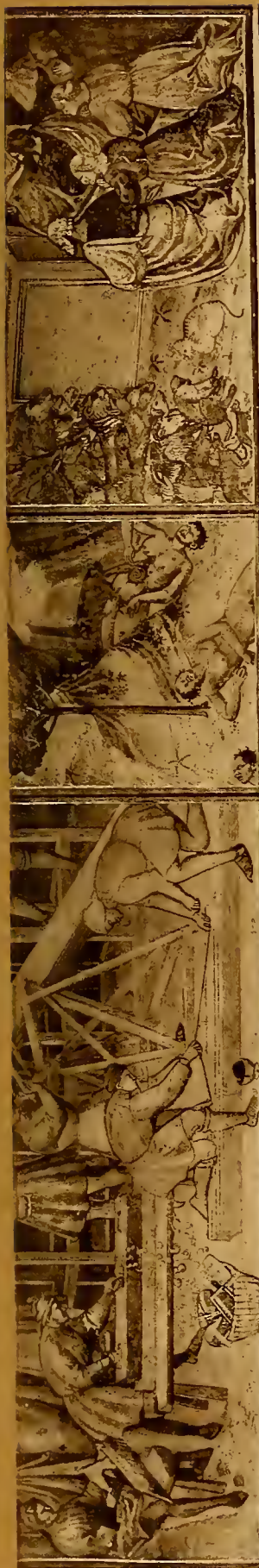
In his painting for the monks of Vallombrosa of the *Baptism of Christ* Vasari tells us that "in this work Leonardo da Vinci, then still a youth

THE BUILDING OF THE TOWER OF BABEL.

From the Fresco by BENOZZO GOZZOLI.

(*Campo Santo, Pisa.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



and his pupil, lending his assistance to the work, painted an angel with his own hand, which was much better than anything else in the picture;" and this writer adds elsewhere—"the which thing was the reason that Andrea gave up painting, being furious that a mere boy should do better than himself."

Indeed the lovely angel here, kneeling beside the upright figure of the Saviour, belongs to another race from those hard angular realistic forms, whether nude or draped, in which Andrea delighted, and is rather the twin-brother of these who kneel within the painting of *Madonna of the Rocks*. We have evidence that Leonardo was, in 1476, in the *bottega* of Verrocchio, and it is most probable that there he assisted him in his sculpture work and bronze casting, as he may have helped him too in the background of this very picture of Christ's Baptism. For Verrocchio as a landscape artist takes no mean place in Florentine art, and follows here the initiative of Pesellino, of Baldovinetti and of Roselli: we may admit this even without giving to him, with some modern critics, that most beautiful *Annunciation* of the Uffizi, whose refinement of type comes nearer to his pupil Lorenzo da Credi, and yet nearer still to his far greater follower Leonardo.

But Lorenzo himself is to be by no means neglected in our record of Florentine art; without Leonardo's intellectuality or his subtlety, he shares with him in the types both of his women and his children—types which they must have worked out to some extent together as fellow pupils within Andrea's *bottega*—and he adds a sweetness and refinement of his own.

His paintings of the Uffizi—the *Holy Family*, *Nativity*, *Annunciation* (where the kneeling Virgin is delightfully conceived), *Christ* with the *Woman of Samaria* and with *Mary Magdalen*,—at the Pitti Palace his roundel of the *Holy Family*, and in the Florence Academy his beautiful *Nativity* and *Adoration* are slightly varying renderings of very similar themes—always exquisitely finished and fairly correct in drawing, distinctive and of refined beauty in type, and with carefully treated land-

scape backgrounds. But in the Uffizi, too, is his rather plump nude *Venus* and his delightful *Portrait of a young man*, which are not unwelcome variations from his familiar rendering of sacred subjects.

I shall return in a later chapter to Lorenzo's fellow pupil, Leonardo da Vinci; and resume now the thread of Florentine history from that conspiracy of the Pazzi with its murderous reprisals, which Sandro Botticelli in his earlier life must have witnessed.

The league formed by Pope Sixtus IV. against Lorenzo de' Medici was a formidable one, comprising the Republic of Siena and King Ferdinand of Naples; and the failure of the conspiracy, accompanied by the hanging of the Archbishop, had only increased the Pope's resentment and fury. In September of 1479 the allied forces under the Duke of Calabria defeated the Florentines, and ravaged their territory.

The plague had now broken out at Florence, and Landucci notes that "on the 18th day of April, 1479, the plague was so bad that I went off to my villa at Dicomano with all my household (*mia brigata*), and left the shop in the hands of my apprentices." Lorenzo de' Medici himself never entered the camp while this disastrous war was in progress, and left its conduct to the general of the Republic, the Duke of Ferrara. "Up to the coming of this Duke of Ferrara," says Sismondi, "the Florentines might have fairly complained of having no leader; but, after his arrival, they certainly [complained of having one, and very soon repented their bad choice;" and Landucci bears this out when he speaks of "the failure (*difetto*) of our Captain, the Duke of Ferrara, and the want of harmony among our citizens." These were, no doubt, among the causes which lead to the capture of Colle di Val d'Elsa by the Duke of Calabria, on November 15th of 1479. He had fired 1024 shots from his "bombards," we are told, and brought down the greater part of the walls; and it is interesting to note that the great Sienese artist, Francesco da Giorgio, was here, with his own patron the Duke of Urbino and Alfonso of Calabria, in charge of their artillery. "When the Pazzi conspiracy"—I have written elsewhere—"brings war with Florence, and

SS. PETER AND PAUL BEFORE THE PRO-CONSUL.

Detail from the Fresco by FILIPPINO LIPPI.

(*Bancacci Chapel of the Carmine Church, Florence.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



Duke Federigo with Alfonso Duke of Calabria leads the leagued armies of Siena and the Pope into the Val d'Elsa, Francesco accompanies his beloved patron, as his chief engineer; and it was his skill in directing the artillery which opened a breach in the walls of Colle di Val d'Elsa, and led to the surrender of the city.

On the 8th day of the December following (1479) Sarzana, the fortress which defended the Northern passes into Tuscany, fell in like manner, — a grave loss to the Republic : but two days before this Lorenzo de' Medici had taken a bold resolution, and had himself gone to Naples to treat with the King. If Lorenzo felt himself out of place in the life of camps, he was already the most consummate politician and diplomatist of his age; and he now succeeded in persuading King Ferdinand that his real interest lay in peace with Florence. We get a last echo of the Pazzi conspiracy in the surrender from Constantinople of Bernardo Bandini, — “who was captured and given up by the Grand Turk : the which Bernardo had fled from Florence when Giuliano de' Medici was killed, thinking that he would be safer there..... and on the 28th of December, 1479, he was hung from the windows (of the palace) of the Capitano.”

Thus the last of the ill-fated conspirators had perished, and on the 13th day of March Lorenzo de' Medici arrived at Livorno on his way back from Naples. “And we all marvelled much that he had returned safely, for all the people doubted that the King would not let him come back; and yet more did we marvel when we knew of the great things he had achieved. God be his aid!” It is thus that the good apothecary Landucci — representing no doubt the average Florentine citizen's verdict — rejoices at his merchant prince's return.... “and on the 15th of the aforesaid month he arrived in Florence at twenty-one o'clock (9 p. m.). And on the 16th following came the good news of peace, about seven o'clock in the morning, and great *fiesta* was made with bonfires and ringing of bells, and on the 22nd day of March, 1479, the city gates were opened, that had before time been closed.”

But the prince whom Florence now welcomed back with the added prestige of success, already felt himself a master in his own city. Using that successful instrument of the Medicean ascendancy, a *balia*, he succeeded (April, 1480) in transferring to a new council of seventy members the government of the Republic; at the same time he did not hesitate to make use of the finances of the Republic in keeping up that lavish splendour with which he had dazzled the people of Naples, and which now won him his surname of "The Magnificent;" and this new Council, which was really under his control, authorized the employment of State monies in settling his debts. His old enemy, Sixtus IV., had died from a fit of gout combined with a violent passion on the 13th of August in 1484. Lorenzo's position at home and abroad seemed now secure, and he counted among his allies the King of Naples, Pope Innocent VIII. at Rome — to whose son Franceschetto Cibo Lorenzo married his daughter — and the Duchess Bona (and afterwards Lodovico il Moro), at Milan.

But Lorenzo—like Cosimo de' Medici before him—veiled his real despotism by a sincere passion for culture.

We have already found one after another of the great Florentine artists—Filippo Lippi, Domenico Veneziano, Donatello, Verrocchio, Benozzo Gozzoli and Sandro Botticelli amongst them—seeking and enjoying the Medicean patronage; and for the cause of the "Humanities" Lorenzo worked as zealously and whole-heartedly as Cosimo before him, but with infinitely greater personal literary talent.

His poems are to be reckoned with amongst the Italian literature of the age, in which they claim an important position; an instance among the best-known is his Carnival song, *The Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, with the wonderful lilt of its refrain

*Quanto è bella giovinezza
Che si fuggi tuttavia....*

"The Tyrant," wrote Savonarola, in his treatise on the Government of Florence, "especially in times of peace and plenty is wont to occupy

PORTRAIT OF PIER FRANCESCO DE' MEDICI.

(Detail from "The Adoration of the Magi.")

From the Fresco by FILIPPINO LIPPI.

(Uffizi Gallery, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



the people with shows and festivals, in order that they may think of their own pastimes and not of his designs;" and there is every reason to think that Lorenzo sought, in following also his own personal bent, to dazzle the people with his splendour, or amuse them with his nightly revels and masques.

Yet his own enjoyment must have been sincere and one with theirs; his poetry breathes of the spirit of his age, and of his own magical personality, whether in his *Canti Carnasialeschi* he echoes the merriment of Carnovale, or in his Sonnets he tells us of his early loves or sings the praise of Lucrezia Donati, or in his pastorals, like the *Ambra* or *Corinto*, describes the charm of Tuscan country life. "Lorenzo's studies in verse" — says Symonds — "produce the same impression of Bronzino's in painting. They are brilliant, but hard, cold, calculated, never fused by the final charm of poetry or music into a delightful vision." True though this criticism may be, speaking generally, of his work in poetry, yet we come to question it when we read such lines as those in which, in his Tuscan idyll, he describes the fresh charms of his Nencia di Barberino.

*Le labbre rosse paion di corallo,
Ed havvi drento due filar di denti....
Le gote bianche paion di cristallo
Senza altri lisci ovver scorticamenti :
Ed in quel mezzo ell'è come una rosa,
Nel mondo non fu mai si bella cosa.*

In philosophy Lorenzo achieved a yet higher result in the revival of the Platonic cult. We have seen already (Ch. I) that Leonardo Bruni had translated the works of Plato, and had been captivated by that philosopher's charm of style and elegance of diction as much as by his matter. *Est enim in illo* (he writes to Niccolo de' Niccoli) *plurima urbanitas, summaque disputandi ratio ac subtilitas.... In oratione vero summa facilitas, et multa atque admiranda, ut Græci dicunt, Charis.* It was Cosimo, too, who had induced Marcilio Ficino to turn from the study of medicine to that of philosophy, and in a latter to Lorenzo de' Medici

Marsilio calls Cosimo his spiritual father. *‘Ego sacerdos minimus, patres habui duos, Ficinum Medicum, Cosimum Medicen. Ex illo natus sum, ex isto renatus.... hic autem (i. e. Cosimo) divino conceravit me Platoni.’*

Yet within this very Florence of art and scholarship and easy pleasure the reaction was secretly preparing. Fra Girolamo of Ferrara, whose eloquence as a preacher was already famous, had been installed by Lorenzo himself as Prior elect in that convent of S. Marco, which we have seen (Ch. I.) that Cosimo had so lavishly endowed. In the August of 1490 he had delivered a sermon of remarkable power—its text drawn from the Book of Revelation—in the church of S. Marco, and shortly afterwards had been transferred to the Duomo of Florence. His antagonism to the Medici was not long in declaring itself. He omitted the usual visit of courtesy to Lorenzo—the wealthy patron of his convent of S. Marco,—and took no steps to meet this patron’s overtures of good will. His opposition to Lorenzo was no doubt sincere and based alike on political and religious grounds. As a churchman he had no sympathy with the new philosophy patronised by the Medicean circle and still less with the licence and revelry commended in the “Songs of Carnival;” as a politician, and a very able one, he saw in Lorenzo the secret foe of liberty. Even the policy by which Lorenzo maintained his friendship with the Holy See, and gained the Cardinal’s hat for his son Giovanni de’ Medici at the early age of thirteen, did not probably command his sympathy, and was itself interrupted by the death of Pope Innocent.

But Lorenzo did not live himself to see this event, with its momentous political results. A slow fever had combined with the gout which was hereditary in his family to undermine his constitution, and he had lately retired to the quiet of his Villa at Careggi. The efforts of the physicians (who are said to have added pearls to their drugs) were in vain; and the story runs that as his last hour came near Lorenzo sent for Fra Girolamo, saying he was the only honest friar he knew. After he had confessed his sins to the monk, Savonarola still standing by his bedside, said to him *‘that three things were yet required. To have full and lively*

ARMS OF THE MEDICI.

By DEI DELLA ROBBIA.

(*Ospedale del Ceppo, Pistoja.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.

faith in God's mercy; To restore what thou hast unjustly gained—and to give back her liberty to Florence.'

Lorenzo, while accepting the former conditions made no answer to the last, and turned his face to the wall. He died without Fra Girolamo's absolution.

Such, at least, is the story, as given by writers of the Frate's party—though Politian, who was with Lorenzo in his fatal illness, does not mention it. His death at this juncture changed the whole current of Italian history. New forces were at work within Florence—new dangers threatening her from without. In the place of Innocent VII., Roderigo Borgia had been elected as Pope, under the title of Alexander VI.



THE MADONNA DEL SACCO.
From the Fresco by ANDREA DEL SARTO
Cloisters of the SS. Annunziata, Florence.
Photo Alinari, Florence.



CHAPTER IV.

FRA GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA.



SCULPTURE at Florence in the period we have now reached has a very special claim on our attention; and this because it developed qualities which are peculiarly its own, which are as distinct from the beauty of the antique, as they are apart from the work of the Pisani or of the later Renaissance sculptors, such as were Cellini, Gian Bologna and their contemporaries — qualities which can be felt, but which no words of any critic could ever quite adequately analyse.

The monumental work of Desiderio da Settignano and of Bernardo Rossellino has already come before us (Ch. I) in describing those noble early Renaissance *Monuments of the Humanists Carlo Marsuppini* (Santa

Croce, Florence) and *Leonardo Bruni* (Santa Croce also), where we saw these artists following out the conception of Donatello or Michelozzo in the Florentine Baptistery (Tomb of Pope John XXIII.), add a richness of decorative fancy and a delicacy of technical handling which is their own.

Beside these may be placed Antonio Rossellino's *Tomb of the young Cardinal of Portugal* in S. Miniato at Florence, and Mino da Fiesole's *Monument of the Margrave Hugo* in the Badia and his *Tomb of Bishop Salutati* in the Duomo of Fiesole; besides other monuments by these artists, portrait busts, and countless variations (whose reiteration, however, never wearies us) of those two figures of the young Virgin Mother and her Babe.

To the utmost delicacy of marble work, whether in relief or in the round, is joined in these figures a refinement of sentiment which sometimes (with Mino for instance) almost borders on insipidity—but never reaches it. It is the crystallization of certain tranquil moods of the soul which is attained in these figures; the expression, through the medium of plastic art, of certain exquisite moments in nature,—the hint of coming spring-time, the freshness of a dawning summer day, the charm of refined womanhood or of the evanescent moment when the girl becomes the woman,—and all these given in an atmosphere which has serenity and sweet harmony as its note.

Perhaps we feel this even more than in the marble—where the sheer technical dexterity is wont to assert itself—in the terra-cotta work of this prolific period: we get here the first fine rapture of creative improvisation, we come very close to the artist's innermost self in those angels by Agostino without S. Bernardino at Perugia and in their Lombard brothers and sisters of S. Eustorgio. Throughout Tuscany, too, at this time a host of workers were moulding the clay or colouring it to their fancy, as may be seen in the work of Ciccio da Gambasi within the little Pinacoteca of Empoli Cathedral; but it was Luca della Robbia who first gave the art a quality of restraint, of purity, and of serenely imaginative beauty, which places it on the same level as the highest contemporary sculpture.

PORTRAIT OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI, CALLED THE MAGNIFICENT.

From the Fresco by **GIORGIO VASARI.**

(Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



For Luca was himself a finished sculptor, — one of the great Florentine sculptors of his time. He had been chosen to carve upon Giotto's Campanile those figures of *Grammar*, *Philosophy*, and *Music* (where Orpheus plays his lute) which still remain in place; and his *Singing and dancing Children*, in marble (now in the Opera del Duomo), were the pendant to those by Donatello, and deemed worthy to stand beside them in the organ-loft of Florence Duomo.

His marble *Tomb of Bishop Federighi* of Fiesole (once in S. Pancrazio, now in S. Trinità) shows above the Bishop's recumbent figure an *Ecce Homo* with S. John and the Virgin. Angels bear the dead man's name upon a wreath. Thus his whole work marks a high level in contemporary sculpture, both in relief and monumental design.

But he had already turned his attention to glazed work in terra-cotta, and among his earliest efforts in this direction are probably the lunettes of the *Resurrection* and *Ascension* above the dome of the Sacristy in Florence Cathedral.

Blue for the background and white for the figures are here the colours used; and the same subject of the *Resurrection* appears over one of the doors of the Florentine Academy of Fine Arts, treated in a very similar manner, and showing the white upsoaring Christ emergent from the prone and sleeping Roman soldiers. Luca's hand appears too — as Michelozzo's assistant — in the ceiling decoration of the Chapel of S. Giacomo in S. Miniato, where we have studied Rossellino's *Tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal*; but, if we wish to study the general character and contrasting effects of this Della Robbia work, we can choose no better place than the upper room of the Museo Nazionale at Florence. Here we can compare Luca with his nephew Andrea, and with others, either of his own family or working in his *bottega*; for his commissions became now so numerous that he took Ottaviano and Agostino Duccio into partnership with, later on, Andrea della Robbia and Andrea's son Giovanni; while yet later we hear of two other sons of Andrea, Luca and Girolamo.

The elder Luca della Robbia (1400-83) comes here before us with the

very lovely *Virgin and Child with angels* of S. Pier Buonconsigli. His simplicity and purity of contour show to far greater advantage here than in the more crowded and complex subject of the *Resurrection* : but I must own that here, in this Museo Nazionale, Andrea della Robbia (1435-1525) seems to me to fully equal Luca himself in his three *Tabernacoli* of the *Virgin and Child*, where, keeping always to white and pale blue, he attains just that delicacy of sentiment and beauty of type which we have noticed in the Florentine sculptors of this period. Note, too, here Andrea's crowned head of *S. Catherine*, and compare this delightful creation with those della Robbia heads which surround the great cloister of the Certosa without Florence. Next Andrea's son, Giovanni della Robbia (1469-1529), comes before us with his lovely *Presepio* in colour (blue, green and yellow), and his no less lovely roundels of *S. Francis* and *S. Orsola* ; but here I think we shall notice that, with the attempt to secure greater richness of effect by greater variety of colouring, the reserve, the simplicity and purity, which give the greatest charm to the work of Luca the elder and Andrea, are endangered, and already to some extent lost.

One work, however, here of the *Fabbrica della Robbia* — where the colours used are pure white and a very clear yellow only — claims, and has always claimed, my strongest admiration. The figures represent *Christ and the Kneeling Magdalen*, who bends herself with outstretched arms before her Saviour; and, — though the treatment has an intensity of action that brings to our thought Botticelli in painting and, in sculpture, the great Sienese Jacopo della Quercia, — the drawing, the swing of movement, above all the marvellous beauty of type of the Magdalen are worthy of special notice.

And without, in the churches and streets of Florence and through the Tuscan country-side, the work of the Della Robbia comes often to greet us — and is always welcome. Take within Florence that beautiful relief above the Lavabo within the Sacristy of S. M. Novella, or again the *Meeting of SS. Francis and Dominic* in the Loggia that faces the great Dominican church of S. M. Novella; or the *Coronation of the Virgin* but a few streets

PORTRAIT OF FRA GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA

By FRA BARTOLOMMEO.

Convent of S. Marco, Florence.

Photo Minari, Florence.



HIERONYMI FERRARIENSIS ADEO
MISSI PROPHE TÆ EFFIGIES ^{256.}

off, over the entrance door of the Ognissanti, the *Lunette (Virgin and Child)* of the Via dell' Agnolo, and that of the same subject with angels which is over the entrance door of the Florentine Accademia; or, going just round the corner into the Square facing the SS. Annunziata, those delicious *Figures of babies*, swaddled up tight or naked, in medallions upon the Hospital of the Innocents.

It is one of the special charms of Florence to come suddenly, even when we may least expect it (as in the case of the *Tabernacolo* in the Via Nazionale), upon one of those delightful relics of her old ceramic art; and, without in Tuscany, Pistoja, Prato, the Certosa of Val d'Ema, Arezzo, Empoli, Impruneta, nay almost half the little townships of Tuscany contain some souvenir of this art, which was as exquisite as it was evanescent—for it never really survived (in its best form) those first workers of the Della Robbia family.

Taken as a whole the Della Robbia work covers about one hundred years (say 1443 — date of Luca's *Resurrection* — to 1566, when Girolamo died in France) of the best creative epoch of Florentine art, and of its most strenuous political life; yet those fierce contests of factions which ended in the Medici tyranny never seem to have left a trace upon the serene quietude of their Saints and Virgins, and winged adoring angels.

In the very forefront of that political movement stood a figure who will now demand our closest attention and study. Fra Girolamo Savonarola has already crossed our story of Florence in the preceding chapter. "He was of middle stature and dark complexion" (writes one of his more recent biographers), "of a sanguine temperament, with a nervous system which was extraordinarily delicate and sensitive. His flashing eyes, dark grey in colour, gleamed out from beneath the black heavy eyebrows. His nose was aquiline — the mouth large, with thick lips, but in whose curves there showed itself the greatest firmness of character. His forehead had ere long become furrowed with deep wrinkles, and showed in its whole character the man's constant absorption in his own meditations upon the deep and weighty problems of life."

The above description may be supplemented by my readers by reference to existing portraits of Savonarola in the Uffizi collection and elsewhere, — notably to Fra Bartolommeo's painting (in the Academy of Fine Arts at Florence) of his great teacher as S. Peter Martyr.

The son of a leading physician at the Court of Ferrara, young Girolamo had, through his family, the entrée into the court circle of the d'Este, which was one of the most brilliant in Europe. In the very year of his birth (September 21 of 1452) the Emperor Frederic III. had passed through Ferrara with a suite of two thousand attendants and courtiers, on his way to receive the Crown of the Holy Roman Empire in Rome herself; and on his return journey north he paid a second visit to the city of the d'Este, and at that time invested Borso d'Este with the coveted title of Duke. Kneeling before the Emperor, and clad in cloth of gold covered with jewels, Borso received his formal investiture while the people of Ferrara cried aloud, — *Duca, Viva il duca Borso!* But he had to pay handsomely for this honour, and his faithful subjects' pockets were eventually reached by a well-considered but searching system of taxation. Borso d'Este was indeed famous for his splendour, and we see him in the fresco of his Schifanoia Palace moving among his observant courtiers, clad in rich brocades with many jewels; but his successor Ercole I., who came to the throne in 1471, continued these traditions of the Ferrarese dynasty, and the court of the d'Este — whence issued Beatrice d'Este and the yet more brilliant Isabella d'Este da Gonzaga — remained one of the most splendid as it was one of the most cultured Courts of Italy. There was indeed another side to this life of courtly splendour — the side which we see when, beneath the Castello Rosso at Ferrara, we visit the dark noisome dungeon where Parisina, wife of Niccolo d'Este, was confined before her execution. And these prisons were rarely without some inmates; they formed the pendant to that brilliant courtly life in the sunlit galleries above.

That these facts were present to young Girolamo's mind is more than probable. What is certain is that he conceived an invincible repugnance to this court life, where his father held the position of physician, and

HERCULES STRANGLING ANTEUS.

By ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO.

(*National Museum, Florence.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



after one or two visits absolutely refused to return to it. Nor did the newly discovered classical culture attract him. The Bible and the works of S. Thomas Aquinas were already his favourite study; the sense of sin and folly in the world around him, —

*Vedendo sotto sopra tutto il mondo
Ed esser spenta al fondo
Ogni virtude ed ogni bel costume.*

— seemed already to oppress him, and found expression (1472) in the poem *De ruina mundi* from which these lines are taken; and it seems that at this time, in his first youth, an unhappy love affair contributed to turn the thoughts of the lonely lad from a world in which he found no peace or profit to the life of God.

His decision was already taken when at Faenza in 1474; and, after a year's struggle with himself and with his mother's opposition, he left Ferrara and his home (in April of 1475), and turned his steps to the convent of S. Domenico, at Bologna.

Quid facimus? Quid sic stamus anima, frustra laborantes?

Thus begins the letter of which his father records in a note. "I remember how, on April 24, that is the day of S. George of 1475, Geronimo my son left home and went to Bologna, and entered into the order of the brethren of S. Dominic to be and to remain a monk.

"*Heu me miserum!* Woe is me! What are we doing? Why do we delay? Why are we so tardy? The oppressed poor cries out, and there is none to hear him: the widows and the people call for help and remain neglected. All things are full of impiety and evil! All is full of usury and robbery, of blasphemy and crime, of adultery and sodomy, of ambition and pride, of hypocrisy and falsehoods!

"Here Virtues are made vicious, and Vice takes Virtue's place. Shall I say more? There is none that doeth good — no, not one. *Non est qui faciat bonum — non est usque ad unum!*"

In this remarkable and authentic letter, which was long believed to be lost, Savonarola already seems to proclaim himself as the preacher of repentance : these three foremost facts of his later teaching, — the intolerable sense of the sin around him, the certain need of a speedy Divine vengeance, the subsequent salvation of God's people — are already foreshadowed. "*Irruat*," he says here, "*super eos formido et pavor*;" and then later, "*Plantabis eum in monte hereditatis tuæ, Domine*." But many years were yet to pass before the young novice of S. Domenico, abased with the sense of his own unworthiness, scourging his body with long fasts and giving himself to the most menial conventual service, was to become the rival of Lorenzo de' Medici, the practical Dictator of the Florentine Republic.

When he first entered Florence in 1481, driven southward by the tide of war, it was as a humble and unknown monk — a guest of that convent of S. Marco, which was to be so closely and intimately bound up with his later life — that he traversed the crowded streets of the brilliant city of Arno.

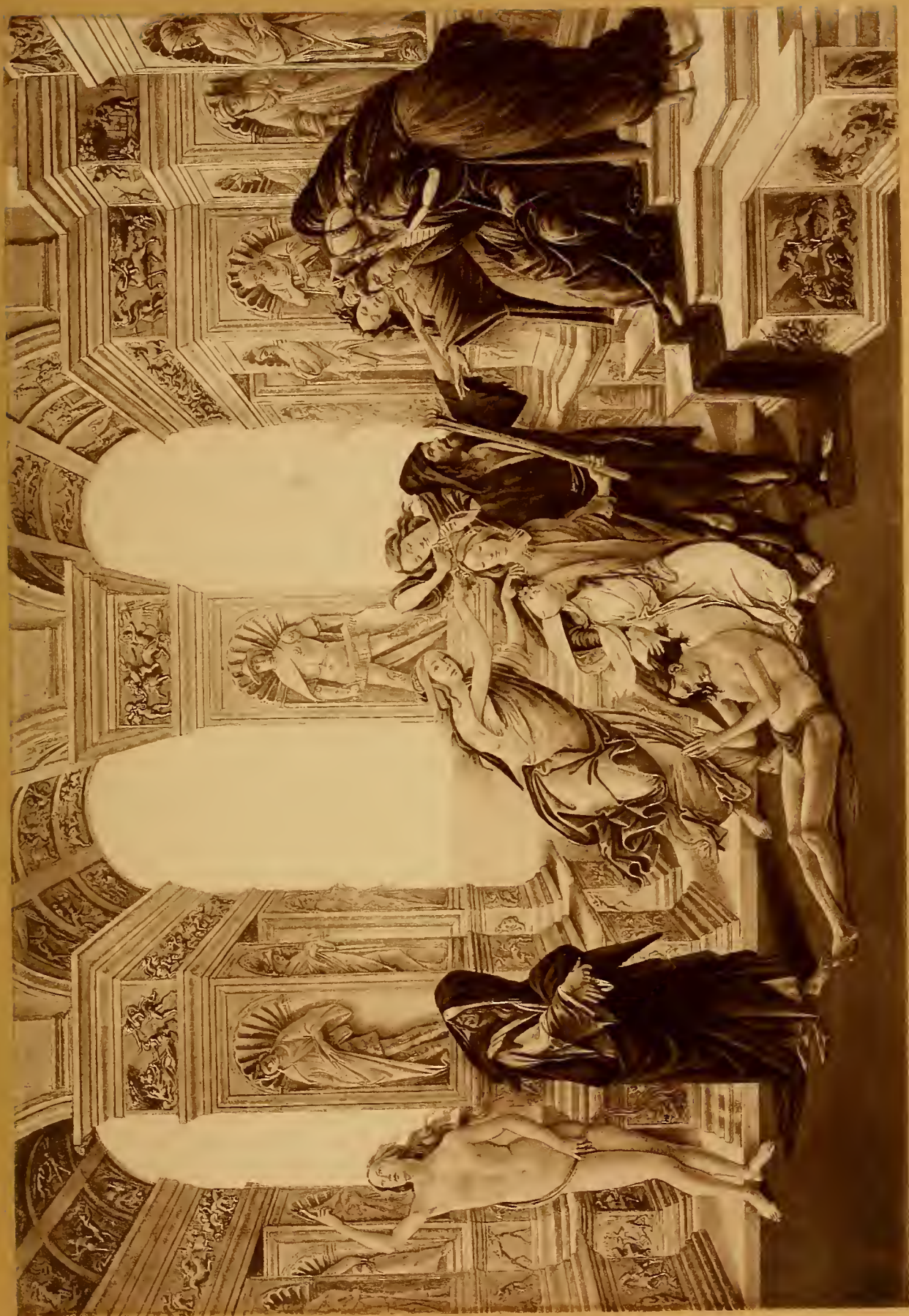
We have seen in these pages something of that wonderful life upon which the Ferrarese monk now looked out with angry questioning eyes. We have seen the immense and splendid growth of architecture, the great dome of Brunelleschi soaring into the sky; the Palaces of the Medici, the Pitti, the Strozzi, the Peruzzi, — the great Libraries which were being formed to hold the fruits of this new and immense activity of scholarship, — the works of bronze and marble of Donatello and Verrocchio and Mino, — Ghiberti's noble Baptistery doors, then in all their freshness of gilded bronze, and the frescoes and paintings which made the Florentine School at this period the envy as well as the glory of Italy.

But to the young monk, fresh from his visions of the cloister, from his fasts and trances, his study of the Hebrew prophets and Revelation, this art and external beauty of life and passionate love of learning in the Florence of Lorenzo the Magnificent meant nothing.

"At Florence," I have said elsewhere, "he was brought face to face



THE CALUMNY OF APELLES.
From the Painting by SANDRO BOTTICELLI.
(Uffizi Gallery, Florence.)
Photo Alinari, Florence.



with the new spirit that was typified in the Court of Lorenzo — typified in its best side by the artists, scholars, and philosophers who surrounded him; in its lower side by the license, the mere rapture of living of these songs and masks of Carnival. There could be no truce between these two. To the monk, nourished on the Bible and the Fathers, the vast erudition of Pico della Mirandola seemed but a chaos of idolatry and useless science; the antique philosophers (he said) were in hell; an old woman knew more of faith than Plato."

Possibly in those little cells of his convent of S. Marco, frescoed by Brother Angelico with such loving care, he had seen an art which he could appreciate and approve; but elsewhere the renascence of the antique, with all its exquisite sense of form, left him cold. Amid those crowds who must have passed him in the narrow Florentine streets or beneath the shadows of the Signory Palace, — who still look out upon us in Ghirlandajo's frescoes of S. Maria Novella, robed in crimson with clear-cut keenly intellectual faces, amongst them Landino and Marsilio Ficino, and Politian, with many of the inner Medicean circle — amid these men who seemed so keenly alive to every side of life, save that inner spiritual world which alone interested him, the young monk found himself at a loss... and alone.

Perhaps the artist who best represents the Florence of this period, with its clear, sane intellect and mundane aspirations, is Domenico Ghirlandajo. He had studied under Alessio Baldovinetti; but "more still did he gather in the harvest reaped by each worker in anatomy, chiaroscuro, and perspective — by such men as Uccello, the Peselli or those masters in plastic art, the Pollajuoli — and resume, we may say, in his art the qualities of science and sound technique which led up to the greatness of "that marvellous Florentine School." And Symonds, in saying that — "He was a consummate master of the science collected by his predecessors. No one surpassed him in the use of fresco. His orderly composition, in the distribution of figures and the use of architectural accessories, is worthy of all praise; his portraiture is dignified and powerful;

his choice of form and treatment of drapery noble," — adds later, "What after all remains the grandest quality of Ghirlandajo is his powerful drawing of characteristic heads. They are as various as they are vigorous. What a nation of strong men these Florentines have been! we feel when gazing at his frescoes."

For Domenico Bigordi, called Ghirlandajo from his earlier trade of making chaplets for the Florentine women, seems to have felt himself most of all at home in fresco : its opportunities as well as its limitations appear to have suited his evenly balanced temperament, and he sighed (it is said) for the length and breadth of the walls of his city to cover with his frescoed story. Born in 1449, his talent was slow of development, but each step was secured. He is a master of his art in those frescoes of the Ognissanti Church at Florence, where, among the supplicants to "Madonna of Mercy," Amerigo Vespucci, who gave his name to the newly found continent, is included, and where is his noble seated figure of *S. Augustine*, which belongs to his later period. To his grandly monumental *Calling of SS. Peter and Andrew*, in the Cappella Sistina at Rome, I have alluded; and it was possibly on his return journey from Rome (or else later in 1487) that he painted that delightful series of the *Story of S. Fina*, in the little hill-town of S. Gimignano delle Torre.

We come next to his fine *Cenacolo* of S. Marco, and to his frescoes of the Sassetti Chapel in S. Trinità. Here, as in his yet more famous frescoes of the choir of S. Maria Novella, which was his next commission, Ghirlandajo uses the story of S. Francis or of the Virgin as a vehicle for the display of his consummate technique, for his stately processional figures, or his grouped contemporary Florentines, — Sassetti or Medici, or Tornabuoni, or Tornaquinci, and their many attendants or friends. He never, like Giotto, goes direct to the heart of his subject, or, like Botticelli, conveys to us the problems of his own emotional life. All is well arranged, carefully carried out, excellent in this composition, often beautiful in its details, but when all is said and done — a little (some will say even more than a little) prosaic. Yet sometimes, even in his fresco

work, Domenico escapes from himself; and, outside this side of his art, in his portraits or altar-pieces (note among these his *Adoration of Shepherds* (1485) in the Florence Academy, a masterpiece which came there from S. Trinità, and his *Old Man and Boy*, in the Musée du Louvre), he gives us work which joins to his consummate technique great charm of sentiment.

Domenico Ghirlandajo's best period (1480-6) of creative art coincides with that first visit of Fra Girolamo to Florence (1481): it was at this time too that the Platonic Academy came to flourish under Lorenzo de' Medici's care, with Marsilio Ficino as the high priest of this new philosophic creed.

Commenced by the initiative of that remarkable scholar, Gemistos Plethon — perhaps the greatest of the vagrant Byzantine students who carried the divine spark of philosophy from their dying Greek empire to this younger and intensely alive Renaissance Italy — Gemistos had instilled into the mind of Cosimo de' Medici his own reverence and love for the Platonic teaching.

Gemistos himself returned to end his days in Greece; but the seed was sown in good soil. Though he was persecuted and hunted down in his own country by the Patriarch of Constantinople, upon the facile charge of heresy, after his death his remains were collected and brought to Italy by (that strange compound of every vice with a very real enthusiasm for culture) Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta; and placed with divine honours — such as might have been given to a saint — in the wonderful temple which Lorenzo's friend, Leo Battista Alberti the Florentine, was even then designing for the tyrant of Rimini.

At Florence in the meantime the Platonic Academy, which had been the offspring of his thought, continued to flourish under the patronage of the Medici princes — first under the care of Cosimo and then of Lorenzo. We have seen that Marsilio Ficino, the son of Cosimo's physician, had been dedicated from his youth to the study of Platonic thought, and had become a scholar of vast and encyclopædic learning, and of wide philosophic sympathies; he included with a profound study of Plato's writings

some knowledge of medicine, of natural history, and also of other philosophic systems, including especially that of the Neo-Platonists.

His own temperament "melancholy, mystic, passionately addicted to the supernatural" corresponded entirely with this line of study; and, in a lax age and amid exceptionally unfavourable surroundings, his own life and character seem to have been as pure as his learning was profound. Indeed in his great work, the *Theologia Platonica*, we are almost overwhelmed by the erudition displayed and by the confusion of opposing systems. Within the world of nature he finds another world of spirits, who transmute themselves into external objects and exist in water, plants, and stars,—yet all have a mutual affinity and correspondence, all are mirrored in the soul of Man, the microcosm of the Universe. And according to the astrological ideas then in vogue he seeks even to classify these spirits under the Zodiacal signs; for in Italy, at this period of the Renaissance, as the religious spirit weakened the occult sciences of alchemy and astrology claimed a greater place in the Court and the street.

The feeling that some great change in the world's belief was at hand possessed men's minds. We see that great pagan Gemistos Plethon awaiting, in the serenity of his philosophic creed, the return to earth of the ancient gods. Cellini, the brilliant artist and man of action and quick resolves, shows himself in his autobiography as being constantly haunted by visions, or seeking aid from magic rites; and even such a keenly intellectual Florentine, even a man as cynical in his political creed as Niccolo Macchiavelli declares—"that the air above us is full of spirits, who, in pity to us mortals, warn us with strange auguries of evils which approach." Marsilio himself shared to a large extent in this wave of occultism, which not even the most practical could quite escape. He himself wrote a work—the *De Vita calitus comparanda*—on the influence of the stars, and the occult virtues of precious stones, such as the agate and topaz: but far more in his new philosophy he sought to harmonize with Christian doctrine these recovered philosophies of the antique world.

Marsilio Ficino, who was thus dedicated from his youth to the study

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PORTRAIT OF ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO.

From the Painting by LORENZO DI CREDI.

Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Photo Alinari, Florence.



of Platonic thought, was born in 1433, and had already had some training in medicine. He was by nature fitted for this special post as hierophant of a new theosophy. "His health was delicate, his sensibilities acute; the temper of his intellect, inclined to mysticism and theology, fitted him for the arduous task of unifying religion with philosophy." Della Torre, in his monumental work on the Platonic Academy, says that to explain Ficino's inborn sympathy for Platonism we must note that he was of melancholy temperament, inclined to mysticism — *d'indole melanconica, mystica, avida di sopranaturale*. In the sexual relations he is described as *in libidinem nequaquam proclivis*; and his own view of love was essentially Platonic.

"The soul," he says, "does not grasp intellectually, but *remembers* the divine virtues it had enjoyed in that happy pre-existence which had been spent in the bosom of God; and towards this recollection those natural things impel it which here below have an imprint of that divine creative mind. Thus the external beauty of a thing or person, seen and admired by us, awakens in the soul the recollection of the Heavenly Beauty; and, since nature has so ordained that whoever desires a thing remains delighted also with that which resembles the object of his desire, so man comes to love not alone that Heavenly Beauty but also the face and form which awakens its remembrance." "Love," he adds later, "is only unworthy of its aim when it desires the fair body for itself, and not for this higher ideal which it awakens in us."

Very similar sentiments, it may be remarked, are frequently expressed by the sonnet-writers of the Quattrocento, who sang their mistresses' praises, with Petrarch as their model; but the difference is that, with Ficino, these utterances were really felt—they really formed the basis of his creed of mysticism. Of course for the material of that creed he went far outside the *Symposium*; his encyclopædic learning embraced all systems of religion, from the Christian Fathers to the Kabbala, from Pythagoras to Plotinus. "The Divine providence," he tells us, "seeking to bring these too within its scheme, brought it about by its guidance that

in Persia, with Zoroaster, and in Egypt, with Mercurius, there came into existence a certain philosophy of religion (*una certa filosofia religiosa*), the which being then nourished and developed in Thrace by Orpheus and Aglaofemos, attained its full growth in Greece and in Italy with Pythagoras, and was then brought to perfect completion by Plato at Athens.

But the method of exposition of this founder of the Academy is entirely metaphorical (*tutta a metafori*), and makes free use of allegorical myths or figures. Hence arose the necessity of interpretation : and now we behold Plotinus, Porphyrius, and Proclus to come forward.

But surely the last and latest-born of these interpreters of the Platonic doctrine is Marsilio Ficino himself. In his writing he seeks to reconcile the dissent—as enduring as it is inexcusable—between religion and philosophy; and, therein, beside the text of Scripture we find the Neoplatonic tradition, which (as he has just told us) commencing with Orpheus, Zoroaster, Mercurius Trismegistus, and Pythagoras finds its completion in the writings of Plato, its interpreters in the great Neo-Platonists, Porphyrius, Plotinus, and their followers.

His *De Christiana Religione* is, in fact, the standard of his intellectual revolt,—the programme (as Della Torre remarks) of the campaign of propaganda with which he sought to explain and to diffuse his new *docta religio*. “It was God’s eternal wisdom”—he tells us himself—“which ordained that in the first beginnings of religion the divine mysteries were handled by those who were at the same time lovers of the true wisdom. And thence it happened that in those earliest times the same persons both investigated the causes of phenomena, and offered sacrifice to the First of these efficient causes, so that in one and the same person was combined the priest and the philosopher. Thus with the Hebrews the Prophets gave their attention at the same time to their priestly or sacerdotal functions and to philosophy : among the Persians the philosophers, because they presided over the sacrifices, were called Magi, that is to say Priests. Among the Indians, the Brahmins investigated the nature of things; among

the Egyptian mathematicians and metaphysicians governed the sacrificial rites; among the Greeks we find as both priests and philosophers Linus, Orpheus, Musæus, Aglaofemos and Pythagoras; among the Gauls the Druids flourished and combined at the same time the sacrificial functions and the treasured wisdom of their race; we have noted the same among the Indians, and finally who does not know what learning was possessed by the presbyters and Bishops among the early Christians?"

"But now," he adds, "the divine union of religion and of philosophy has been unhappily sundered. Wisdom had turned aside to the laymen, among whom it has too often become an instrument of injustice and wickedness; while religion was henceforth entrusted to priests of such bestial ignorance that we could fairly apply in their case the evangelical maxim about pearls being thrown to swine!....." "Yet even in these our times," adds Marsilio elsewhere, "this sacred charge has been given by God to us; and, led thitherward by His guidance, we have ventured to comment and interpret the divine Plato and the great Plotinus — *divina providentia ducti divinum Platonem et magnum Plotinum interpretati sumus.*"

Then, conscious of his high mission, but with perfect dignity he proclaims himself the physician of souls. "*Salutarem animorum exercui medicinam*" — "I practised," he tells us, "the healing of souls: after translating all the works of Plato I myself composed nearly eighteen works on the immortality of the soul and the eternal happiness."

And now we see him turn, in a magnificent appeal, to the thinkers of his time and to the really honest priests—to the former to give their influence to the support of religion, to the latter to give their thought and time to this forsaken pursuit of learning. "Oh men!"—he cries to them—"who are inhabitants of the Heavenly City—*O viri cælestis patriæ cives!*—and ye too whose feet are on this earth, let us join together, I here beseech of you, to free philosophy, God's high and sacred gift to man, if we can so do, from this indifference to the religious life (*impietate*); and we *can* do it, if our will is but set aright — *possumus*

autem, si volumus. But no less let us give our whole strength to free holy religion from the vile condition of contented ignorance (*ab execrabili inscitia*). In this sense I exhort you all, and I pray especially those who are men of learning (*philosophos*) that they may either wholly turn themselves to religious life, or at least give their careful attention to it; but the priests I no less beg to give their diligent attention to the pursuit of true learning."

But to the Dominican, Fra Girolamo, this message of the Platonic scholar, of the intimate of Lorenzo de' Medici was as nothingness : its accumulated learning, gathered from the ancient Mystics, the Kabbala, the Jewish commentators and Platonic teachers was a vain babbling, its elevated theism savoured, too probably, of heresy. From Florence, where, as a preacher, he had been a failure, he had been sent to S. Gemignano, the towered mediæval city set high upon its hill, — which, as we approach it from Certaldo or Poggibonsi, looks so fantastic and unreal that it might be a city of the witches, set there by magic spell. Here we now come to study Gozzoli's paintings in S. Agostino, or Domenico Ghirlandajo's frescoes in the chapel of Santa Fina. "Very beautiful is the prospect from these ramparts of a spring morning, when the song of nightingales and the scent of acacia flowers ascend together from the groves upon the slopes beneath. The grey Tuscan landscape for scores and scores of miles all round melts into blueness, like the blueness of the sky, flecked here and there with wandering cloud-shadows." And here it was that the special sense of his prophetic mission first seems to come to Savonarola : here that he uttered the famous three conclusions, which form the basis of his later sermons at Florence.

These famous conclusions were later summarized by a contemporary historian as follows : —

Ecclesia Dei indiget reformatione et renovatione.

Ecclesia Dei flagellabitur et post flagellationem reformabitur.

Florentia flagellabitur, et post flagellationem renovabitur, et prosperabitur.

Hæc omnia erunt diebus nostris.

But it was at Brescia that his voice first became heard throughout

DAVID.

By ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO.

(National Museum, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence



Italy; the coming scourge, the later regeneration, the speedy fulfilment of all these events were in his thought as he pictured to these Brescians the calamities which were to befall Italy—and their own city. This was in 1486; and in 1491 Fra Girolamo was back in Florence and delivering a course of tremendous sermons—their text, drawn from the “Revelation”—in the Church of S. Mark.

That this feeling of uncertainty, of oppression, of looking for the coming storm was in the air is certain from contemporary evidence. Luca Landucci, in his Florentine Diary, has the following significant entry. “And on the seventeenth day of January, in 1478, there came a certain hermit, and preached, and threatened to us many ills. He had been at Volterra busied in tending a hospital of lepers. He was a young man of twenty-four years, and went barefoot, with a great sack upon his back; and he said that S. John and the Angel Raphael had appeared to him. And one morning he jumped on to the Ringhiera of the (Palace of the) Signory to preach : then the Eight sent him away. And every day,” adds Luca, “something of this sort used to happen.”

Thus Savonarola, in his prediction of the coming evils, only echoed a very general feeling; but this in itself strengthened his position. “He saw more clearly than other people what was inevitable:” he not only prophesied the coming danger, but described it clearly, specifically, and asserted that the time of its fulfilment was close at hand. We have noted already his attitude of hostility to the Medicean despotism; and the death of Lorenzo in 1492 only increased the preacher’s influence, while it weakened the forces which were opposed to Liberty.

Already, in the year 1490, such was the crowd attracted by his preaching to S. Marco that he had to remove to the Cathedral; beginning with scholastic exposition as he became inspired with his subject the whole audience of that vast building—which, Nardi tells us, was so crowded that additional galleries had then to be erected—fell under the sway of his magnetic eloquence. Even when he was yet a novice at Bologna the wrongs of the Church had filled his mind : in his vision then the Church

had appeared to him, had pointed to her torn raiment and wounded body, to the cavern which was now her home; and, to his question who had done this wrong, had given answer — “A haughty and lying harlot — Rome!” So then in his great sermon (1493) upon the text *Ut quid Deus repulisti in finem*, he returns to his charge, he preaches on the wickedness of Christ’s Church, he tells of its false guides and its evil prelates.

But the movement of scholarship, of the recovery of the antique treasures of the past, finds here no sympathy in his thought.

“Go,” he cries, “to Rome, and see if through all Christendom within the houses of great Prelates and great Masters men think of other things save of poetry and the art of oratory. Go indeed and look for yourself! You will find them with the texts of the Humanists (*coi libri d’Umanità*) in their hands, trying to understand, by the aid of Virgil, and Horace, and Cicero, how to rule men’s souls. No prelate is there now, no great teacher who has not some astrologer in his train, who shall decide for him the hour and the exact moment at which he shall ride forth, and do this matter or attend to that; nor will these great ones take a single step without their astrologer’s approval. Our very preachers have deserted Holy Scripture for astrology and for philosophy, and made the texts of the ancients their theme and ruler. Such men as these it is who are now the columns of our Church.”

We see thus that his position is the very antithesis of that expressed by Marsilio Ficino in his *De Doctrina Christiana*. He turns, very deliberately, his back on this cultured circle of Landino, Poliziano, Pico della Mirandola, Leo Battista Alberti and Ficino himself, who lived in the intimacy of the magnificent Lorenzo; and, where the scholar would include all the learning of his time — even perhaps this very element of astrology, in which he certainly took an interest — within his scheme of “Christian Learning,” the preacher looks entirely to spiritual regeneration from within; and turns, in an appeal of impassioned eloquence, to the help of God....

“What then art thou doing, O Lord? why sleepest thou? *Quare*

obdormis Domine? Exsurge, et ne repellas in finem. Arouse thyself, O Lord! Come forth to free thy Church from the hands of devils, from the hands of tyrants, from the hands of evil prelates. Dost not thou see that she is filled with evil beasts, with lions, bears and wolves that have wasted and destroyed her? *Quare obliviscaris tribulationem nostram?* Dost not thou see, dear Lord, this our great tribulation? Hast thou forgotten this, thine own Church? Dost not thou love her? Dost not thou hold her dear? But yet she is thine own spouse? (*Ell'e pure la sposa tua. Non la conosci tu?*) Dost thou not know her as thine own? For she is the very same for whom Thou didst descend into Mary's womb, for whom Thou didst take on thee the robe of human flesh, for whom Thou hast suffered so many wrongs, for whom Thou hast shed thine own blood upon the Cross! Then has she not cost thee dear, O Lord; and therefore it is that we pray thee to come, and come quickly, to free her now!

"Come, I say, and punish these wicked men, confound them, so that we may ever serve thee in quietness!...."

Such was his theme, varied often by the more direct message of God's imminent judgment upon the sins of Italy; and now—to men's astonishment—before their very eyes his prophecies began to unfold themselves, to take living shape! The dissension among the Italian States, their immense riches, their advanced civilization and culture (in contrast to a still semi-feudal Europe), their neglect of any efficient military organization were the real causes which made them first an object of desire, and then an easy prey, to the nations without: it needed but a favourable moment to put these forces into motion.

On the one hand Lorenzo de' Medici's death undid the carefully woven net of political interest, with which that astute statesman had bound together the "Regno" of Naples, the States of the Church, the Republic of Florence, and the Dukedom of Milan: on the other hand the accession of Charles VIII. — as adventurous as he was weak-minded — to the throne of France brought into play the efficient cause of an Italian invasion.

Both these events took place in 1492; for although Charles had succeeded in 1483, he was then only thirteen, and it was not till the latter date that he commenced to rule. This date of 1492 was, in fact, a turning point in Italian history. It marked the death of Lorenzo de' Medici himself. It marked the discovery by Columbus of America,—which eventually diverted the trade of the world into new channels. It marked the accession of Roderigo Borgia to the Papacy—which directly led up to the northern schism and the Reformation.

But it was the personal vanity of Piero de' Medici which threw the first spark into the material which was ready for a conflagration. This young man, the eldest of the three sons of Lorenzo, was physically a fine creature, was a good rider, the best player at *pallone* in Italy, and spoke well and with facility; but his pride and want of judgment were the vices which led to his ultimate ruin. The son and husband of an Orsini (his mother was Clarice, his wife Alfonsina Orsini), his manners were those of a great Roman noble rather than of a Florentine citizen. He gave the Republic his orders, and handed over its government to his friends or confidants.

His first foolish step in politics was caused by his jealousy of the other branch of the Medici family—the grandsons of Cosimo *Pater Patriæ*: by his order these cousins, Lorenzo and Giovanni de' Medici were arrested (1493), and it seems certain that at one time they were in danger of their lives. The advice of wiser friends, such as Francesco d'Antonio Taddei and Francesco de' Gherardi caused him to change his mind, and merely confine these young men to their villas. But the popular sympathy was evidently on their side: when they issued from their prison they received an ovation, “and they made their way to their own homes accompanied by many citizens, with great and evident rejoicing and frequent acclamations of the people.”

Piero's popularity was already on the wane, and the influence of Fra Girolamo, already great at this time, was not in his favour; but the young man's next false move was absolutely disastrous in its consequences.



THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.

From the Painting by LORENZO DI CREDI.

(Academy of Fine Arts, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



The alliance of Florence with Milan, with the Kingdom of Naples and the Duchy of Ferrara, which was Lorenzo's work, had been renewed in 1480. It was usual on the accession of a new Pope that the States of Italy should present their congratulations; and Lodovico Sforza, who now governed Milan, proposed that his allies should send their ambassadors simultaneously to Rome, that they should all enter Rome together, and the ambassador of Naples should be the spokesman and present their address to the new Pope, Alexander VI.

His object was really a sound one. He wished to show to the world that the alliance still subsisted in all its force, and was a guarantee to Italy against the danger of foreign invasion.

But he had not reckoned on the vanity of Piero de' Medici. This latter had been named by the Republic as the ambassador of Florence, and wished on this occasion to make a striking figure. "For two months," says Sismondi, "his house had been full of tailors, embroiderers, decorators : all his jewels were on the costumes of his pages : a single collar that one of them was to carry was valued at 200,000 florins." But all this display would have been less noticed if the four ambassadors had made their entrance at the same time; nor would Piero's colleague, Gentile, Bishop of Arezzo, have been able to pronounce that address, on whose Latinity he had bestowed as much attention as Piero had given to his jewels and embroidery. "These weighty considerations changed the face of the Peninsula : they brought fifty years of war to Italy, and to Florence the loss of her freedom."

For Lodovico Sforza, who prided himself on nothing so much as his political sagacity, thought he perceived in this conduct of the young Medici — which was only dictated by the most puerile vanity, — some deep and secret significance. His own position at Milan was insecure and really unjust; he had for fourteen years governed the Duchy as Regent for his own nephew Gian Galeazzo, who had now arrived at years of discretion. Gian Galeazzo was married to Isabella, daughter of Alfonso of Aragon, and grand-daughter of Ferdinand King of Naples. What then more natural

than that Lodovico should suspect Neapolitan influence—behind the slight offered him by Piero in declining his proposal as to the Roman Embassy? He withdrew from the old alliance, which had been fostered with such care by Piero's father, Lorenzo, and formed a fresh treaty with Alexander Borgia, with the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole d'Este, and the Republic of Venice.

Now it was the turn of Ferdinand of Naples to be alarmed : he found himself left outside this new alliance, and was inclined to make himself unpleasant as to the long duration of Lodovico's Regency. At the same time the Sforza himself distrusted his new allies. He was shrewd enough judge of character to perceive that Alexander Borgia was not a reliable friend; and he knew the Venetians to be the natural enemies of his Dukedom, which they had long wanted for themselves.

"Sforza," says Alexandre Dumas, "who was a man of resource and resolution, with one hand presented a poisoned drink to his nephew, and with the other signed an alliance with Charles VIII. of France."

This is history *à la Dumas*, — that is, history presented *dans les grandes lignes* by an accomplished dramatist : what really happened was more gradual, but eventually arrived at the above conclusions.

After Lorenzo's death Lodovico il Moro sought to hold in his own hand, as Lorenzo had done, the tangled threads of Italian policy; but he never possessed the Florentine's brilliant intellectual powers, and the policy on whose judgment he piqued himself ("God and the Moor," he loved it to be said, "foreknow the future") was as slippery and unsound as it was always purely selfish.

The Duke of Bari and later of Milan itself, the husband of Beatrice d'Este and brother-in-law of Isabella d'Este da Gonzaga, the patron of Leonardo da Vinci, the prince whose court was the most brilliant in Italy was destined to end his days in a French prison; but much of our sympathy for his misfortunes must be estranged when we find that on two occasions to save his own throne he did not hesitate to expose Italy to the horrors of invasion.

At this moment, feeling his position at Milan insecure and distrusting his new allies, he decided to bring about the very evil he had sought to avert : he sent the Count of Belgioso to the court of Charles VIII., to prevail upon that monarch to assert his claims to the throne of Naples. Those claims had been already secured by Louis XI., when the old King René of Anjou, and his heir-in-chief Charles, Count of Maine and Duke of Calabria, handed over their own claims (1476 and 1481) on Naples to the French crown.

Charles VIII. was now the heir to these claims. He was young, adventurous, and with around him as counsellors men of low estate, — such as De Vesc, a body-servant, and Bricconnet, a merchant who had become Bishop of S. Malo,—men whose interest it was to flatter his vanity and ambition. In spite of his sister Anne de Beaujeu's opposition he was inflamed by the prospect of an adventurous expedition, by Belgioso's offer of a free entrance into Italy through Lombardy and the port of Genoa; and in 1494 he moved southwards with his army upon Lyons.

The terrible prediction of the Dominican monk was beginning to fulfil itself; and Italy was not to be allowed even the honour of a worthy conqueror.

“From infancy,” said the historian Guicciardini of this King, “he had been weak and subject to sickness. His stature was short and his face very ugly, if you except the dignity and vigour of his glance—his limbs so disproportioned that he had less the appearance of a man than of a monster. Not only was he ignorant of liberal arts, but he scarcely knew his letters.

His liberality was inconsiderate, immoderate, promiscuous. Hating business and fatigue he displayed in such matters as he undertook a want of prudence and of judgment. His desire for glory sprang rather from impulse than from reason.”

Meanwhile at Naples was ruling one of the worst tyrants of Italian story. The son of that great and cultured Prince, Alfonso the Magnanimous, Ferdinand, now King of Naples, was a devil of dissimulation and

cruelty. He loved to keep his victims in cages, revelling in their sufferings; he would fatten with plunder his instruments of extortion (such as Cappola or Perucci) only to murder them later and enjoy their riches; or would delight his guests (such as Jacopo Piccinino) with high festival — only to end the varied programme with their assassination.

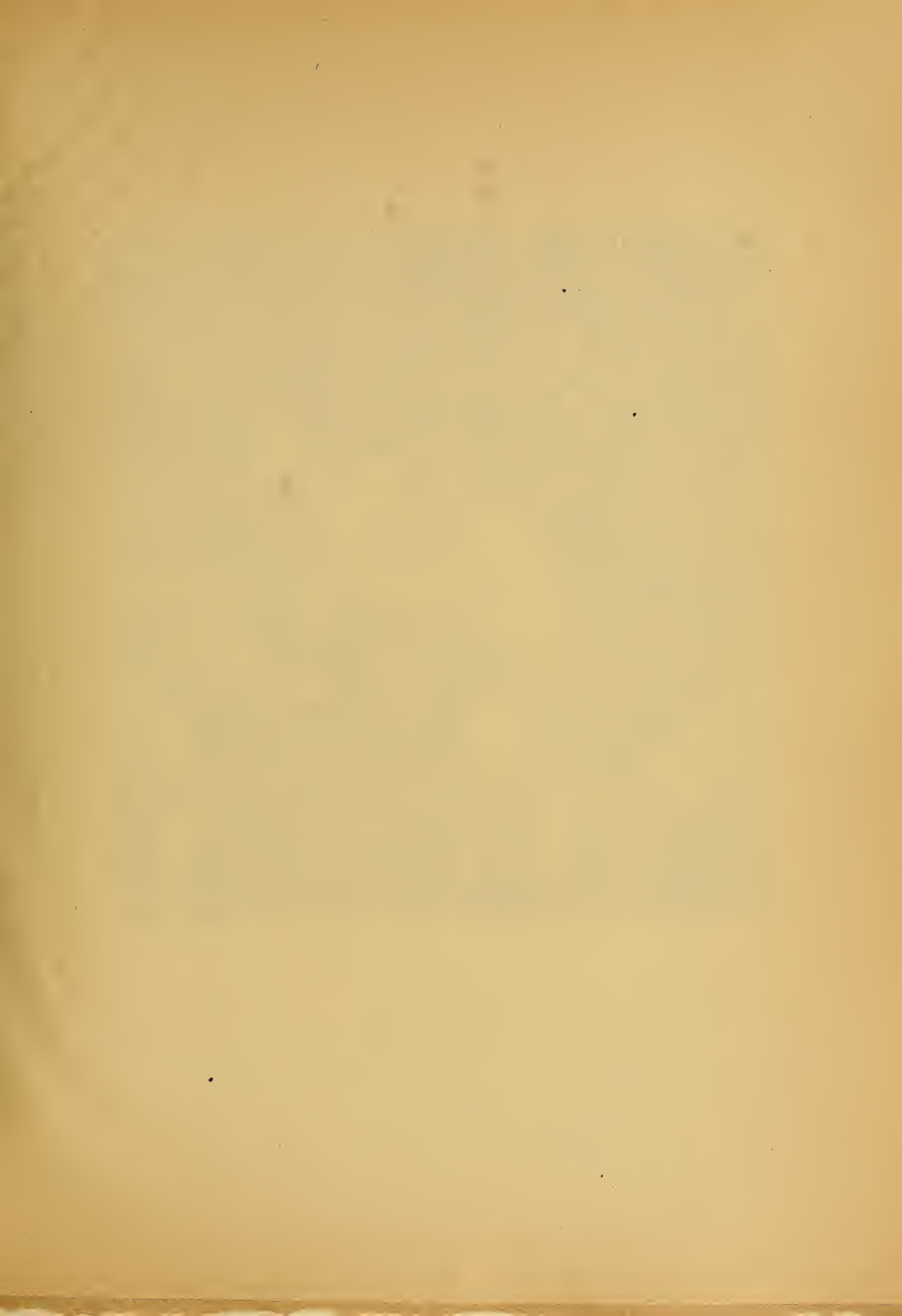
Having entrapped his own Barons it is believed that the whole number (the Princes of Altamura and Bisignano, the Dukes of Malfi and Nardo, Counts Marcone, Lauria, Milito, Nola and many others) had their throats cut, and were thrown in sacks into the sea. They certainly disappeared from among the living; but the cunning King kept up appearances by sending each day a store of provisions to their prison: later on he seized their wives and children and all their estates.

Alfonso of Aragon, the son of Ferdinand, was less cunning than his parent but even more savage; and it was he who had succeeded in this very year of 1494 to the kingdom of Naples.

The spirits of his own and his father's victims seemed already to call aloud for vengeance. "The chambers of his palace in Naples were thronged with ghosts by battalions, pale spectres of the thousands he had reduced to starvation, bloody phantoms of the barons he had murdered after nameless tortures."

Meanwhile, at Rome, Alexander VI., who had owed his election to wholesale bribery, was providing for his children — a Cardinal's hat for Cesare Borgia, a rich husband for Lucrezia — and was at the same moment intriguing with both Charles VIII. and Bajazet, Sultan of the Turks; Florence remained still under the influence of the foolish and headstrong young Piero and his advisers; Venice, the mistress of the seas, pursued her own individual ends, and at Milan Lodovico Sforza's tortuous policy — supported by his father-in-law Ercole d'Este, who really desired, it is said, the Sforza's ruin — was welcoming to Italy the foreign invader.

Thus we find everywhere throughout Italy complete political disunion, selfish personal intrigues, a standard of social and political morality as low as the artistic faculty was highly and intensely developed, a very



THE VIRGIN APPEARING TO SAN BERNARDO.

From the Painting by FILIPPINO LIPPI.

(Church of the Badia, at Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



general feeling of unrest, of apprehension of some coming change and danger; and without, across the Alps, the *flagellum Dei*, "the scourge of God," in the shape of this hunch-back monarch, thriftless, always in want of revenues, never with a definite policy, surrounded by flatterers and bad counsellors—but yet advancing slowly, as if impelled by Fate, towards the ruin of Italy.

In August of this year of 1494 he has already crossed the Alps by the Mont Genève, and is moving down the Val di Susa upon Turin: with him are the Breton archers and the cross-bowmen from the plains of France, 12,000 of them in all, with 8,000 Gascon infantry armed with the arquebus and the two-handed sword, 8,000 Swiss and German pikemen, and 3,600 men-at-arms, "the flower of the French chivalry." The great Lords of France have followed their King—the Duc d'Orléans, afterwards Louis XII., the Duc de Vendôme, the Comte de Montpensier, Louis de la Trémouille, and many others: but closer in his confidence and with more real power are De Vesc, now Seneschal of Beaucaire, and Bricconnet, Bishop of S. Malo.

The passes of the Alps, which lead down to Susa and Turin, had been opened to the invading army by the Princesses of Savoy and Monferrato; and at Asti the French King was met by Lodovico il Moro, with his father-in-law, the Duke of Ferrara, and all that Court of Milan—of whose license Corio, in his History of Milan, gives such a graphic description. Here the illness of the French King, which was described as small-pox, delayed the invading army; and when Charles recovered sufficiently to advance to Pavia, there awaited him the sight of the young Gian Galeazzo, the rightful heir of the Milanese Dukedom, in prison, and the pleadings of his wife, the beautiful Isabella d'Aragon.

Policy was here at variance with the instincts of chivalry in the young French King's breast. Isabella was the sister of Ferdinand, prince of Naples, the daughter of his enemy, Alfonso of Aragon: but she was a beautiful young woman, a princess in distress, and the wife of his own first cousin. Lodovico noted his guest's indecision and mental trouble,

and took short steps to have it removed : as soon as the French host was on its way south to Piacenza he had his nephew Gian Galeazzo quietly poisoned at Pavia. Such at least was the suspicion, which Guicciardini asserts that all Italy shared : what is certain is that Gian Galeazzo expired on the 20th of October, and that Lodovico, having received the title of Duke of Milan, rejoined the French army. But a sentiment of suspicion and alarm became general among the invaders on hearing this sinister news.

“ Every action of the Milanese became suspicious to the French ; each man of their host began to ask uneasily how the king dared to plunge into the interior of Italy leaving as his only support in the rear this ally, who had just cleared his way to a throne by poison.” “ What was this beautiful land,” says Symonds, “ in the midst of which they found themselves, a land whose marble palaces were thronged with cut-throats in disguise, whose princes poisoned while they smiled, whose luxuriant meadows concealed fever, whose ladies carried disease upon their lips ? ”

To the captains and soldiery of France Italy already appeared a splendid and fascinating Circe, arrayed with charms, surrounded with illusions, hiding behind perfumed thickets her victims changed to brutes, and building the couch of her seduction on the bones of murdered men.

Yet she was so beautiful that, halt as they might for a moment and gaze back with yearning on the Alps that they had crossed, they found themselves unable to resist her smile. Many, however, of his captains now pressed King Charles to arrest his march. The Duc d'Orléans (who had already an eye upon the Milanese Dukedom) backed up by the Prince d'Orange and others, suggested to the King to first secure his conquest of Italy by that of Lombardy.

The policy was sound, though in defiance of his treaty with and personal obligations to Lodovico : but either his love of adventure or obstinacy, or both, gained the day with Charles VIII., and he continued his hazardous march southwards.

It seemed, indeed as if the powers of destiny were on his side in this adventure of romance, in which only his own marvellous luck, only the incredible folly and weakness of his opponents saved him from utter ruin. Through the "golden autumn weather," in that fateful year of 1494, the French army advanced southward from Parma toward Pontremoli, whence they must cross the Western Apennines to arrive in the plains of Tuscany. Sarzana was the key of the situation—Sarzana with its fortress Sarzanello, which looks across the lowlands to the sea from among the gleaming marbles of Carrara, and seems to dominate all the plain from Massa to the great pine-forest beside Pisa. To us now it looks a typical mediæval fortress : then it was held impregnable and was in the hands of Florence, who was pledged by Piero de' Medici to stand by Alfonso of Naples and the Pope of Rome in resisting the northern invader.

But Piero was beginning to find his own position at Florence becoming more and more untenable. "At this juncture," says Nardi, "the person of the French King coming about the beginning of October from Parma and Pontremoli, with a great array of cavalry and footmen, entered the lands of the Florentines, and captured in Lunigiana Castiglione degli Terzieri and other castles subject to or in alliance with the Florentines. Wherefore in Florence men began to have grave doubts about the government of the State ; and on the other hand the people began to raise its hopes, and to take courage and to speak generally without respect of Piero de' Medici... Whence it befell that Piero, as if moved by despair and further counselled thereto by his own friends, formed the plan, without making further proof of the faith of his fellow citizens, to become reconciled with the most Christian King ; and, deserting the League of his allies, to throw himself into the arms of his Majesty with what conditions were possible to be obtained, as we have noted that Lorenzo his father had already done (finding himself in similar difficulties), and had placed himself within the power of King Ferrando (*i. e.* Ferdinand) of Naples, whose ally and friend by that same act he had become." But Lorenzo was the ablest man and the most subtle diplomatist of his age, — while his son was a weak-headed conceited

young sportsman, whose only title to regard lay in his father's name and his success at *Pallone*. With incredible folly he now rode into the French camp at Pontremoli and then and there handed over to their leader the keys—not alone of “Serrezana and Pietra Santa, lands and castles most strong in their position, and fortified and provided for war in a manner that was marvellous, but also of Librafatta and Mutrone and the other fortresses; the which strongholds were then all given into the hands of the King by their officers and rectors, who held them for Marzocco” (the emblem of Florence) “on the sole authority of the said Piero, without awaiting the letters and countersign of the Signory (as should have been done according to the due observance of the laws). These matters when they became known in Florence to the Signory and people caused the greatest alarm (*perturbatione*) and excitement through the city—each and every citizen being bitterly incensed that Piero, without any sort of commission from the Signory, and indeed without the knowledge of his fellow-ambassadors, had the mind to rob his own country of so many lands and strongholds of the greatest importance.”

With the keys of this most difficult position thus placed into their hands the French entered Lucca, and then Pisa, without striking a blow: at Lucca an embassy from Florence waited on their King, among whose five *oratori* “was brother Hieronimo Savonarola of Ferrara, of the order of the preaching friars and of the Convent of S. Marco, of whom we shall have occasion to speak in another place.”

But Piero de' Medici had already gained the French King's ear and predisposed his mind, so that though this first audience at Lucca had a friendly reception, in a second reception at Pisa, “although the Frate spoke with great force in defence of the innocence of the Florentine people, and used many deprecatory words, combined even with threats on the part of God (*parole deprecatorie ed comminatorie da parte di Dio*) this embassy was of little moment.”

Pisa, one of the most ancient and most flourishing of the Italian Republics had been reduced to a condition of complete decline by the Florentine

AURELIUS CÆSAR.

By MINO DA FIESOLE.

(National Museum, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



domination. "Pistoja" (such was the Florentine political maxim) "must be kept in subjection by her factions, Pisa by her fortresses;" and acting on this maxim they built two citadels in Pisa, which dominated the hostile inhabitants, whom they kept out of every public office, harassed and crushed by relentless taxation, and at the same time, by neglecting the system of canals which drained the delta of the Arno, they ruined the commerce of the city, and turned her rich fields into a feverish swamp. The treatment of Pisa by Florence is a blot on the history of the Republic; and it is necessary to understand this to explain the desperate and heroic resistance which the Pisans made for their hardly recovered liberty.

For the entry of the French army, the secret approval of Count San Severino (who represented the Duke of Milan, and was plotting to recover Pisa for his own Duchy) the eloquence of Simone Orlandi, and, lastly, an unguarded remark of the King himself awakened in the citizens of Pisa the unforgotten memory of their past liberty: and in a moment the Florentine officials were driven forth, the "Marzocco," the emblem of her rule, torn down from the public monuments, and the Republic of Pisa restored. Thus at one moment the Florentines had lost their most important strongholds on the sea board and in the mountains toward Lunigiana, and at the next they saw Pisa, which after all represented their outlet to the sea, torn from their grasp, — while an invading army was already within an easy march of their walls. The popular excitement and the tension in the city was at that moment at its extremest point, and is reflected very clearly in the entries of Landucci's *Diario*.

One man stood forth among the anxious people at this crisis, a commanding personality—"that was Fra Girolamo, preacher of the order of S. Dominic, who dwells within S. Marco, and his native land is Ferrara; of whom we believe that he is a prophet, and he himself does not deny it in his sermons, but ever speaks as the direct messenger of God (*da parte del Signore*), and he preaches to us many things."

But it was now certain that the French army would enter the city, for good or ill, "and on the 4th day of November, 1494," says Landucci, "went

forth a decree (*bando*) on the part of the Signory that every man should be obliged to shew his house to lodge the *Franciosi* (Frenchmen). And it was commanded them that they should neither touch nor take away anything that was in their houses. And on the 5th of November 1494, certain mandatories (*mandatari*) of the King of France went throughout Florence, and marked the houses that most pleased them. They went into the houses, and through all the rooms, and marked out this for that great Lord, and this for the other Baron. And you must note here that they were not hundreds but thousands of them, in such wise that the whole city was occupied in all and every part; even the houses that were not so marked when the men-at-arms and the infantry arrived they all at once filled up every "borgo" and every street that they found space within, crying out *Apri qua!* (Open here!), and cared not whether its owner were poor or rich. They gave us to understand that their intention was to pay; few there were who ever got paid. Or if they did pay anything, it was the horns of the ox that they paid for and the rest that they ate. And there was another yet more important matter that there were few who had sent away their women-folk from home, except the young girls (*le fanciulle*) who were sent into convents or to relations where there were no soldiers billeted. As a matter of fact they behaved very well, so that there was not a single one who spoke a dishonest word to our women. They had even in secret a great fear. Every day they kept asking how many men Florence could turn out (*fare*); and they were given to understand how Florence, at one peal of her bells, could summon one hundred thousand citizens from within and without.

The real truth was this, that they had come with the purpose of putting Florence to sack; and this their King had promised them; but they saw that the game was not even drawn, much less won. All this did the Lord God omnipotent."

For all this there was great anxiety, and the pulse of the city in those days was beating at fever heat. We see this from an incident which occurred on the day following (November 6) when "many *Franciosi* had

arrived, who were the advance guard of the King, and had taken their lodgings in the houses which had been marked for them with chalk. And in that same evening, about two o'clock, certain strokes of the bell were heard in the Palace (of the Signory). In an instant the Piazza was full of people, who had thought that the bells rang out for a parliament (*a parlamento*); for everyone was aroused and in great fear, awaiting every moment some great event."

It was this critical moment that Piero de' Medici chose for his return to Florence. "He came from the King of France at Pisa, and when he reached his home (*i. e.* his Palace in the Via Larga) he threw out sweetmeats and gave wine to the people to win their goodwill... and seemed in very good spirits (*molto lieto*)."

It is too kind to this youth to believe that the series of fatuous actions which led to his complete ruin proceeded from sheer stupidity: on the contrary it seems quite clear from Nardi's account that he was acting throughout on a deliberate scheme—to first gain the friendship of the French monarchy, by any concessions, however ruinous, and then make himself tyrant of the city. Obviously his first move in this game would be to get possession of the Palace of the Signory, and then proceed to a forced *Parlamento* and Balia. In fact Nardi distinctly says—"In the time that he yet sojourned in Pisa Piero de' Medici, having already come to an understanding with His Majesty... and having given orders to Signor Pagolo Orsini, his kinsman, that he should take into his pay many foot-soldiers in the country-side round Florence and other parts of Tuscany, returned to the City,—with the fixed intention of capturing the Palace, and forcing the Signory to make a *parlamento*; and by that means to recover the State for himself, not alone according to usual methods of the ancient government (*antico governo*) of the Medici, but with the firm purpose to make himself absolute Prince of his country, pushed on chiefly thereto by the advice of his wife and of the other Orsini who were his relations. Then he would have either killed or sent into exile all those whom he knew to have schemed against him, and to this end had brought the

aforesaid Pagolo Orsini with his men-at-arms and mounted cross-bow-men to Santo Antonio a Viscano near to Florence."

But he had reckoned entirely without the ancient spirit of the Florentines, which was far from dead, and at this moment was stimulated by the peril of their position, by the record of his recent folly, and by the preaching of the great Dominican. What happened finds a more dramatic rendering than even in the recognised historians in the diary of our good apothecary, Luca Landucci, who was himself in part an eye witness of what follows.

"On the ninth day of November, 1494, it being a Sunday, about the twentieth hour, when the bells were sounding vespers, Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici wished to go to the Signory in their Palace, and wished to bring also with him his armed servants. And since the Signory would not let him enter, except it were himself alone and unarmed, he would not go alone, and turned back. And then he came back again into the Piazza, and at this same time people began to come into the Piazza, and all in a moment they began to cry within the Palace *Popolo e Libertà* (the People and Freedom) and to ring the great bell *a Parlamento*" (*i. e.* for a Parliament) "and at once there came into the Piazza the Gonfaloniere del Bue, and behind him came Francesco Valori on horseback with other mounted citizens, all crying *Popolo e libertà!*" (the Republican watchword just as *Palle* was that of the Medici). "He was the first that came on to the Piazza, but on a sudden now, before an hour had passed, the whole Piazza was alive with flags and crowded citizens. By this time the Piazza was full of armed men, with tremendous cries of *Popolo e libertà!* And although most of the people did not really understand what all this movement (*novità*) was about, yet there were not many citizens who went to the house of Piero de' Medici. The Tornabuoni went, however, with certain other citizens with their arms at their sides and many of their followers, as he (? Piero) had commanded them, and they went forth into the street at his door crying *Palle!* Then Piero got on horseback to come into the Piazza with his following; and more than once he made a start, and then stopped

VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ANGELS.

By LUCA DELLA ROBBIA.

(National Museum, Florence.)

Photo Alinari. Florence.



again. My belief is that he did not find himself accompanied by too many citizens, and that also they must have told him that the Piazza was full of armed citizens. And at this moment the Cardinal his brother" (Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, afterwards Pope Leo X.) "started from his house, with many of his servants and with those citizens who were with him, and came down into the Corso as far as Orto San Michele, crying *Popolo e libertà* like the rest, seeming to separate himself from Piero. And in fact he got as far as the Piazza when they turned their sword-points on him with great and fierce cries, calling him traitor and would not have him there. He turned back, not without peril of his life. And suddenly there went forth a decree that every stranger should lay down his arms, on pain of the gallows, and one went forth to cry it by way of the Canto della Macina, and then another by the Via de Martegli, and death on the gallows to whoever should give help or favour to Piero de' Medici. And in that time you would see some beginning to abandon Piero de' Medici, and to lay down their arms : one slipped off from one side and one from another, so that at last he was left with but few. Wherefore the aforesaid Piero took his departure, and went toward the Porta San Gallo ; the which city gate he had made to be kept open by Giuliano his brother, with many soldiers both within and without. And without he had Signor Pagolo Orsini with horses, who was armed, ready to come in. The moment did not seem to them very favourable ; and Piero waited a little, and then decided to go off in God's name (*con Dio*) and Giuliano with him. The poor Cardinal, quite a young man, remained at home, and I myself saw him at the windows" (of his Palace) "on his knees, with his hands clasped praying to God. When I saw him I felt quite sorry for him, and came to the conclusion that he was a good youth and of a good disposition (*buona ragione*). And, seeing that Piero had gone, they say he disguised himself as a friar, and that he too went off in God's name. At this time there went forth a decree into the Piazza that he who slew Piero de' Medici should win two thousand ducats, and he who slew the Cardinal one thousand ; and many soldiers went forth from the

Piazza, and with them Jacopo de' Nerli, and they went to the house of Ser Giovanni di Ser Bartolomeo, and sacked it completely. Then the crowd turned back with the cry *Antonio di Bernardo*, and put his house to the sack, and did the same to the Bargello. All this time the crowd of people kept increasing to go and plunder. Wherefore the Signory sent forth the decree that no more houses should be sacked, on pain of gallows. Whence it came that all the citizens and their standards went all night through Florence in guard of the city, crying always *Popolo e Libertà*, with torches aflame, so that no more harm was done; save that a certain servant of the Bargello in the Piazza who had cried aloud *Palle* met instant death."

Such was the revolution which drove Piero de' Medici from Florence, never to return. We seem to see in Luca's vivid description the old Piazza swarming, like a hornet's nest, with angry citizens, to hear their confused cries of *Popolo e Libertà*, and above all the hubbub and tumult the great bell of the Palazzo tower (*la campana grossa a martello*) with its ominous clang, which sent a thrill of strange terror into Piero's heart and drove him into exile.

The tension and public excitement was still so great that two days later (Tuesday the 11th) on a report that men-at-arms and foot soldiers, sent by Piero, were approaching Florence from without Porta S. Croce, "in less than half an hour all the city was in arms, and running toward the Piazza with such quickness that never did man see them so united, so prompt, both small and great, and with such cries of *Popolo e Libertà*."

But now upon the top of all this excitement, two days later (November 13) came the news of the revolt of Pisa, that Piero and his brothers were at Bologna, and with all this the first entry of the foreign army into the city — "so many French and Swiss and such a crowd, that there was great confusion and terror and suspicion among every class of people. Let anyone imagine what it was to have all that mob (*ciurma*) in our houses, and not having been allowed to remove anything from the houses, and to find ourselves there with our women folk, and to serve them with what they wanted, all this with the greatest inconvenience to us."

The following day saw the return of the Medici, Lorenzo di Pier Francesco and his brother, whom Piero had exiled, and a great many troops (*gran gente*) came in on the Saturday, while on the Monday (November the 17th) King Charles himself made his solemn entry. "Great preparations had been made to receive him, most of all at the door of the Palace of the Medici. They made two great pillars without, on either side the door, with so many adornments and arms of the King of France that I could not describe them all. It was really a triumphal entrance (*una cosa triomfale*), so great was it and so well arranged."

For here it was that he was to lodge — within the deserted Palace of Piero. What a wonderful Palace it must then have been, filled with the treasures of art which Cosimo and Lorenzo had collected, those exquisite frescoes of Benozzo still fresh upon the chapel walls, the bronze *David* of Donatello in his naked adolescent beauty standing yet within the great *cortile*, which is still adorned with antique marbles in relief. Even these barbarous feudal invaders must have been impressed by its beauty, although like children, their first impulse was to destroy and tear to pieces the flower that lay in their grasp : for we soon find what havoc they made within the fair Florentine Palace.

But now, on the 17th day of November in 1494, their King was entering the City as her honoured guest. Behind him, in all the panoply of war, must have marched many of his northern host. "The gigantic barbarians of the Cantons, flaunting with plumes and emblazoned surcoats, the chivalry of France, splendid with silk mantles and gilded corselets, the Scotch guard in their wild costume of kilt and philibeg, the scythe-like halberds of the German lanz-knechts, the tangled elf-locks of stern-featured Bretons... specimens and vanguards of all those legioned races which were soon to be at home in every fair Italian dwelling place." At ten o'clock (*22 ore*) "the King of France reached the gate of San Friano and went towards the Piazza, and they went so slowly that it was twelve o'clock when he entered into Santa Maria del Fiore.

"He dismounted at the steps, and went up to the high altar with so

many torches that they made a double row from the Cathedral door to the high altar, and left a path in the midst clear of the people : and by that path he went with his Barons and the citizens up to the high altar, with such a tumult of cries of *Viva Francia!* that its like was never heard in the world. You may imagine that all Florence was either in the church or waiting without ; and every man there shouted, great and small and old and young, all with a true heart, without any flattery in his thought. Only when the King appeared on foot, his fame diminished a little among the crowd : for really he was a very small man. Yet none the less there was none there who did not love him with a good heart and of a truth."

Charles had indeed at this moment all Florence at his feet ! Their cheers (as says our good apothecary) were from their hearts, not from the lips.

What use did he make of his splendid position ? What would he do with this wonderful prize which had come to him, in part as the reward of his reckless temerity, still more of his marvellous luck ? Here, as elsewhere, he showed himself utterly destitute of any settled plan, any foresight or political sagacity. The Queen of the Cities, we feel, had thrown away her affection on a hunchback fool, who was unworthy of her !

First, he tried the brutal menace. Florence — since he had entered her gates with his lance upon his thigh, followed by his armed troops — was his, he said, by right of conquest. But those sombre palaces and narrow streets of old Florence contained a menace : really he feared to follow up his demand, and we have seen that this fear was very largely shared by his army.

Then he sought to reinstate Piero de' Medici, with whom he had almost certainly some kind of compact made. "Among his first demands the King commenced to treat of the return of Piero de' Medici into Florence (*Fiorenza*), and he wished to leave, besides, his own lieutenant in the city. The which two proposals as soon as ever they came to the ears of the Florentines caused the greatest perturbation in their minds, and such and so great was this suspicion and fear that a very

THE BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN.

Fac-simile in colours.

From the Fresco by DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO.

(*Church of Santa Maria Novella, Florence.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



great number of citizens conspired together in the Palace with the Signory, with the firm intention of making every possible resistance to such demands. The which matters, coming to be known generally among the people outside, caused such indignation that it lacked but little that the whole city had risen on a sudden; and while things were in this state of suspense and tension (*così sospesa e sollevata*), it happened that a quarrel sprang up between some mechanics of the country and the French soldiers, the which incident went so far that the Swiss infantry, billeted within and without the Porta al Prato, set out to force their way through (*sforzare*) Borgo Ognissanti to approach the lodging of the King, from which outrage they were driven back with arms and with stones, which were hurled down upon them from the windows and roofs."

Things were beginning to put on a dangerous aspect, and though the King had already found it prudent to withdraw his support of Piero de' Medici, the crisis came, in spite of this, on November 23. His terms were refused by the Secretaries of the Republic, as to the monies he needed (for here, as always, he was in urgent need of means); "and since the City would not satisfy his requirements, getting into a passion, he said, into a menacing tone, — "I will bid my trumpets sound!" (*Io farò dare nelle trombe*)... To the which words Piero di Gino Capponi, one of the Syndics, with the same audacity as himself and the same firmness of tone, tearing to pieces the copy of the treaty which he held within his hand, replied, "And we will ring out our bells!"

And having said these words he went with his companion towards the staircase. But the King, calling him back (for he knew him personally), said to him, "Ah! Ciappon, Ciappon, you are a bad Ciappon!" (*voi siete un mal Ciappon!*)

And thus peaceably and gladly were the conditions of peace drawn between his Majesty and our Signory."

These conditions, which were actually signed on November 25, in the Palace of the Medici, are given at length by the contemporary historians of Florence. There are twenty-seven articles, twelve among which refer

to the Medici. The tax was taken off Piero's head, and changed into exile not less than one hundred miles from the city. The dowry of his wife, Alfonsina Orsini, was to be returned to her,—and “in all places shall Charles, King of France, be called restorer and protector of the Liberty of Florence.”

But the King had really given way, covering his own discomfiture with a bad joke, and all he cared for now was to get his money; while the Florentines were equally anxious to have him and his troops out of the city. We see this anxiety reflected in the *Diario* of Landucci and the pages of the historians. “We were most anxious now that he should take his departure,” says Nardi, “on account of the frequent troubles which arose between the people and the French soldiers;” and Landucci, under the date of the 27th, with an obvious sigh of impatience, notes in his diary:—“He ought to have left this morning and did not do it: they rang the bells instead *a gloria*, and let off fireworks.” Next day he adds—“and it is said that Fra Girolamo of Ferrara, our famous preacher, went to the King, and told him that he was not doing God's will in staying on, and that he ought to leave. And, moreover, it was said that he went yet another time when he saw that he did not leave, and told him plainly that he was not doing God's will and that the ill that he would bring in this way upon others would turn back upon himself. And this is thought to have been the reason that he left so quickly, because the aforesaid Girolamo at this time was held by the opinion of men to be a prophet and of holy life, and this opinion was held in Florence and throughout all Italy.” But more efficacious seems to have been the visit to Florence of “his Captain of his folk in Romagna, who had for name the Signor Begni”—and who was really Robert Stuart, Count of Beaumont-le-Roger, and Lord of Aubigny.

This Captain “told the King, without mincing his words, that he must leave in any case, that the time was favourable for an advance, and that these continued delays might bring disaster...

“And on the 28th day of November, being Friday, the King left Florence

after lunch and went to lodge at the Certosa, and all his folk about him, behind and in front, so that few only remained."

Nardi adds to this date of the departure his own judgment. "On the 28th day of this month about 10 o'clock (*22 ore*) with all his Barons (*la sua Baronìa*) and men-at-arms about him he left the City, but not with the same favour that he entered, nor even with the same reputation that he would be so easily victorious. The reason of this had been his own lack of wisdom (*suo poco consiglio*) as well as the bad and hateful behaviour of his people : whence it appeared that he himself took pains (*à bello studio*) to make his own enterprise more difficult.

For such was the insolence and wanton arrogance (*supercheria*) of his army that it seemed to make little or no difference to them whether they were dealing with friends or enemies : so that they affrighted all the people who were the most disposed to favour them.

In such wise that had not God of his special grace (as it seemed indeed in the issue) brought him on his way, for the punishment of our own country and of all Italy, it was not the prudence of his own conduct which would have attained such marvellous success. Thus the King went in the evening to lodge at the Palace of the Baroncelli, and the morning following to lunch at the Certosa, and the next day to Poggi Bonzi, and from thence to Siena. Where having made his entry he remained several days, busied upon festivals and banquets and delights of women (*sollazzi di donne*).

Thus this "feckless" monarch passes out of the city of Arno and out of the direct current of her life, although his influence was still to be felt for some time in her external policy, in which Florence remained faithful to the saying that "Lilies should bloom beside lilies." The more one studies this extraordinary military escapade of the invasion of Italy by Charles of France, the more one becomes convinced that it was one of the greatest disasters of history, and that a pious mind, like that of the historian just quoted, could only regard it as a punishment sent by the Almighty for his country's heavy sins.

For the weakness, the imbecility of this hunchback conqueror were even more fatal to Italy than his success or his strength.

Had he been a strong ruler, who would have secured his advance by the first step (recommended, as we saw, by his own captains) of bringing Lombardy under his sway and deposing the scheming Sforza, who would have dealt justly and fairly between Florence and the Medici, and Florence and her subject towns, who would have removed from Rome that abomination and scandal to all Christendom which was the Papacy of the Borgia — and thus perchance prevented the later Western Schism, — and, finally, have driven the murderous despot Alfonso of Aragon from Naples, we should have seen perhaps an Italy subjected, but an Italy amid all the glory of her literary and artistic achievement handing over that message to the one nation of Europe which was most fitted to convey it to the outer world. Instead of this the French monarch, through his own personal fatuity (for he had brave men and good captains of war at his side), was unable to hold for more than a few days, or weeks at most, what he so easily had won. He rode through Italy, said the Borgia, with chalken spurs, marking the houses where he would lodge and the cities where he would raise some fresh loan for his pressing needs : and he displayed (this was the worst) the weakness of this fair land of delight, that he had taken in a few months ride of pleasure, to the greedy eyes of feudal semi-barbarous Europe.

It lies beyond my subject here to describe the rest of his journey, his splendid entry into Rome on the last day (Dec. 31) of that fatal year, 1494, his successful invasion of Naples (February 22, 1495), his hasty return north (June of 1495) to meet the leagued powers of northern Italy in battle on the banks of the Taro, his escape and successful retreat to Asti (July 15), and departure from Turin to France (October 22) in the same year.

A little more than a year had sufficed for him to traverse the peninsula as a victorious invader : but the whole conduct of his enterprise was marked by the same want of definite policy, the same inconsiderate folly as we

PORTRAITS OF DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO AND HIS FATHER.

(Detail from the Fresco of "S. Joachim driven from the Temple.")

From the Fresco by DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO.

(Church of Santa Maria Novella, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



have noted at Florence, and also, it is fair to add, by the same personal courage amid the perils to which his folly eventually exposed him.

But we have now to return to Florence, where, during all this anxious year, we shall find the figure of the great Dominican stand forth as a tower of strength to the city. During these years of peril to the State, when all Italy had been shaken by the sudden entrance of the invader, his voice never ceased to ring through Florence, and his great influence was always on the side of liberty.

It was in this very December of 1494, after the departure of Charles VIII. had left the city still very unsettled, and the constant discussions of the politicians on the *nuovo reggimento* (new Government of Florence) seemed to bring no result, save to disturb the people still further — that he preached his famous sermon on the text (Psalm CXLIX) *Cantate Domino Canticum novum*.

“O Florence,” he cried then, “now I turn myself to thee. If thou wilt renew thyself, oh new City, if thou wilt become really new and change thy state, then must thou needs find new manners and a new life, if thou wouldst continue to exist and to rule : then must thou make a new song (*uno nuovo cantico*), and seek to have new forms of rule. The first thing that thou must do among all the others is this, that thou make such laws that no man in the future can make himself thy head and lord (*farsi capo*) ; otherwise shalt thou be founded on the sand !

“And thou must order things in such manner that no man become such that the others have to bow down before him as their superior, but that true worth (*Virtù*) alone shall have authority. And if thou do this then things shall go well with thee ; and if thou do it not that will happen that I say to you all, that you shall have made your foundation on the sand. We must needs return first to God... *Cantate igitur canticum novum* — make for yourselves a new life. Renew yourselves first of all within, if you would be renewed without ; and if you wish to make good laws bring yourselves first into harmony with the laws of God.”

It was in the year following (1495) that the Florentines appealed to Fra

Girolamo himself to reconstitute their government : and the constitution which he then established is generally admitted to have been the best the city ever possessed. This was certainly the view held by many among his contemporaries, for we find Segni placing him among the good givers of laws (*tra i buoni datori di leggi*), beside Numa at Rome, Solon at Athens, and Lycurgus in Lacedæmon; and Nardi, after describing the jealousies and divisions of the people, gives an account of *Frate Hieronimo's* great sermon before the *Signoria* and Magistrates and people of Florence — “for men only,” as we might now say (*senza la presenza delle donne and de' fanciulli*).

Savonarola here laid down his four main contentions as (1) the fear of God, and the reform of manners and morals. (2) The love of the Republic,— setting aside all private advantage. (3) An universal peace through the State, and forgiveness and forgetting of past injuries and wrongs. (4) To constitute “a form of universal government in such wise that it should include all those citizens who had a right to share in it, together with all those considerations and checks which should prevent any one person raising himself above the equal rights of citizens (*la civile equalità*).”

“And inasmuch as he said that in this his government all the citizens ought to be included, he excluded none who in a lawful manner were capable of sharing (*habile*) in the government of his city. And next did he propose as an example for the consideration of his hearers the form of government and grand council (*consiglio grande*) of the City of Venice, adding, however, thereto or taking away according to what was adapted and agreeing to the natural disposition of the Florentine people, and according as should be deemed useful and of honest purpose by those wise reformers of the State... all the which things he having preached, and exhorted moreover on several occasions, were finally in great part carried through.” By this new government the Signory, the Gonfaloniere of the companies of the people, the twelve *buoni uomini*, and in fact, the whole *Collegio*, including the “Ten of War” (*Dieci della Guerra*) — now called as a better omen the “Ten of Liberty and Peace” — were each and

all to be elected annually. The above constitution was accepted for the four great divisions of the city — Santo Spirito, Santa Croce, San Giovanni and Santa Maria Novella — by their chosen representatives or *accoppiatori* — in each case one for the *Arti maggiori* (greater arts) and one for the lesser (*Arti minori*) — whose names are all set forth in the records; and this “General Council of eighty citizens, councillors of the Signory, was called the Grand Council.”

At this time the influence of Fra Girolamo was dominant within Florence. To the constitution, which he had thus carried through with considerable political ability, he gave its peculiar character by proclaiming Christ himself as the Head of the Republic. Under the spell of his eloquence and his strong personality the Florentines held fast to the French alliance — in spite of Charles VIII.’s inconsistencies and ill treatment — and continued their struggle to recover the Pisan territory... “led on into these hopes,” says Guicciardini, “by the sermons of Hieronimus Savonarola, who declared that much prosperity and increase of empire awaited that Republic after many calamities, but foretold great evils to the Roman Curia and to the other princes of Italy (*ingentia mala Romanæ Curix, reliquisque Italiæ principibus*).” History, as we shall see later, confirmed with appalling accuracy these latter predictions of Fra Girolamo.

But now “not content with political organisation... he set about a moral and religious reformation. Poms, vanities, and vices were to be abandoned. Immediately the women and the young men threw aside their silks and fine attire. The Carnival songs ceased. Hymns and processions took the place of obscene choruses and pagan triumphs. The laws were remodelled in the same severe and abrupt spirit. Usury was abolished. Whatever Savonarola ordained Florence executed.” The children of Florence were his great allies in this crusade of reformation. “On the 7th day of February, 1495”, says Landucci, “the boys tore a veil from the head of a young girl, and there was a scene with her people in the Via Martelli. All this because the boys had been encouraged by Frate Girolamo, that they should correct those who were improperly attired and the card players;

in such wise that when once the cry was raised *Here come the children of the Frate*, no card-player, however bold, he might be, dared to face them, but took to his heels; and the women-folk went about most modestly attired (*con ogni onestà*)... God be praised," adds the old writer, "that I lived in that short time of holiness! But it was a short time only... Wherefore I do pray God that he may bring back that holy and modest method of life to us (*quel santo vivere e pudico*). And what a blessed time it was you may see and think from the things that happened in that time."

Then he goes on to describe the Carnival of the year of Grace, 1495. In place of the merriment and stone-throwing which had gone on in this season from time immemorial, in place of the masques and music of the days of the Magnificent, Fra Girolamo had preached some days before that the children, instead of fooling and stone throwing, should beg and give alms to the poor and indigent. "In such wise that on this day of Carnival when they had heard vespers the troops of them (*le schiere*) came together in the four quarters of Florence, each quarter marshalled beneath its ensign (*Bandiera*). The first was a Crucifix, the second Our Lady, and so on with the others, with the trumpets and flute players of the Palace, and the mace-bearers (*mazzieri*) and ushers of the Palace, all singing lauds, and ever crying aloud—'Hurrah for Christ and the Virgin Mary our Queen! (*Viva Cristo e la Vergine Maria nostra Regina*);' each and all with a spray of olive in his hand, so that truly there were wise men and good who wept tenderly when they saw them, and said one to another: "Truly this new and great change is the work of God; and these children are they who shall enjoy the good things that He has promised." And it seemed to them then that they were beholding those very crowds who went before and behind Christ on the Sunday of Palms (*domenica d'Ulivo*), crying: "Blessed art Thou who comest in the name of the Lord." And well might one then repeat the words of Scripture, '*Infanzium* (sic) *e latenzium perfecisti lalde*.' And note you well that they were reckoned six thousand children or more, all from five or six years old up to sixteen. And

THE VIRGIN WITH THE POMEGRANATE.

From the Painting by SANDRO BOTTICELLI.

Uffizi Gallery, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



all the four quarters united at the Servi, at the portico of the Innocenti and on the Piazza" (*degli Innocenti*), "and all started from thence, and passed by the chapel of the Annunziata and then by S. Marco. Then they followed the usual road of the processions; they passed the bridge of Santa Trinità, and came into the Piazza. And thence to Santa Maria del Fiore to make their offering, the which church was crowded both with men and women, kept separate, the women on the one side and the men on the other, with such devotion and tears from pure gladness and sweetness of spirit (*di dolcezza di spirito*) that the like was never done or seen. Their offering was valued at some hundreds of florins.... There was no thought of avarice or keeping back: it seemed that each one wished to give that he had, and most of all the women; it seemed as if each and every wished to give their offering to Christ and His Mother. I have written these things which are true and which I myself saw, and felt too that holy sweetness, and my own children were among these blessed and modest bands (*fralle benedette e pudiche schiere*)."

Nor was this all. We hear too elsewhere of the "Bonfire of Vanities," brought about by Fra Girolamo's teaching and influence, of paintings by Fra Bartolommeo and Lorenzo da Credi, of manuscripts of the classics and *Novelle* by Boccaccio and the romance writers thrown into the purging flames, along with women's silk and embroideries and finery. The whole city lived for these four years, from 1494 to 1498, in a state of lofty religious exaltation, and the effect on public and private conduct is witnessed to by the contemporary historians. "Lent," we are told, "was through his" (*i. e.* Savonarola's) "preaching celebrated and observed with the greatest abstinence and frequency of fasting; and through this same preaching there were made in Florence many laws and provisions regarding the punishment of vice and the reform of good manners. So that, either from the fear of God or from the terror inspired by those terrible laws, men lived at that time in our City in a most Christian fashion, as compared both with times past and with those which followed."

At the same time, even in these earlier years of Savonarola's sway,

the elements of a reaction were already forming. "The change was far too violent. The temper of the race was not prepared for it. It clashed too rudely with Renaissance culture." And it becomes here necessary, in order to form an estimate of the weakness as well as the strength of the Frate's policy (the weakness was without, the strength within the city, in the spirit which he inspired into his followers) to gain some idea of the inter-relation of Italian politics, in these years which followed on the French invasion.

The first point to notice, as immediately affecting Florence, is the war, with Pisa. We have already seen, earlier in this chapter, the sudden recovery of their liberty by the Pisans during the French occupation. The liberty thus recovered they held to with heroic tenacity. The spirit of the older Republics seemed once again revived. Men and women forgot all else in the effort of holding their city against the hated Florentine. This persistent heroism thwarted all the efforts of the besiegers to capture the city; and the war dragged on year after year—a manifest weakness and danger to Florence.

Next we have to notice the political isolation, at this time, of the City of the Lily; and for this the Frate's policy was largely responsible.

He had welcomed the French king almost as the new Messiah, certainly as the messenger of the Lord to punish the wicked in Italy, and reward the faithful; and though he found him a very unsatisfactory Messiah, who only listened with half an ear to his exhortations, and then committed the next day or hour some fresh stupendous act of folly or breach of faith and good policy, yet Fra Girolamo held obstinately (and held the Signory of Florence with him) to the French alliance.

It is almost touching to find him starting forth to catch the monarch on his hurried return north to meet the armies of the League, and awaiting him, as he came from Siena, at Poggibonzi. "Here" (June 17 of 1495) "Frate Hieronimo had audience, and finding that His Majesty ill disposed as to the affairs of Pisa, spoke with him very freely, with words which again were threatening from the mouth of God (*da parte di Dio*)

as he had done already in time before, when the King did not observe his faith, and his promises made about Pisa and about other matters to the Florentines." The only satisfaction he got was that the King, who was pressed for time, wished to take him in his suite to Pisa, — an offer which the Frate wisely declined, and left his Royal ally at Castelfiorentino. The sermon was probably already half-forgotten in the brilliant reception which the Pisans gave to the French King and his Barons ; and completely in the life of battle and flirtations which awaited the adventurous monarch in northern Italy. Our diarist clearly shews us how the dissatisfaction with the French, especially in this matter of Pisa, turned at once against Fra Girolamo. "Everyone remained ill contented and ill-at-ease. And, when they ought to have complained of the King certain ignorant persons turned their hatred against the Frate : so that men went by night around S. Marco, shouting and crying dishonest words — such as "That pig of a great Frate (*frattaccio*) wants to burn us in our houses," and similar words. And there were some who would have "gladly set fire to the doors of S. Marco."

The League at whose head was Duke Lodovico of Milan stood, at least nominally, for the independence of Italy and her security against the foreign peril : but Florence, with her Signory under the influence of Fra Girolamo, remained steadily aloof from the League and faithful to France.

It seems then to have been accepted that a neutral State could aid with men and money one of two belligerents, without herself declaring war : and in this way both Lodovico Sforza and the Venetian Republic gave material aid to the Pisans in their struggle of freedom, while at the same time the Sforza made overtures to Florence to join the Italian League.

Lodovico Sforza was then at the height of his fortune. He boasted that he had called the French into Italy, — and chased them out of it ; had punished the House of Aragon at Naples, and then restored it to its throne ; and now he proposed to call a fresh foreign ally into Italy in the shape of Maximilian, King of the Romans, to whom he had betrothed

his niece Bianca Maria with a dowry of 400,000 ducats. Under his auspices Maximilian actually entered Pisa, and undertook the siege of Leghorn; but he achieved nothing, and retired northward by the passes behind Sarzana.

To these two factors in the position—the protracted war with Pisa, and the political isolation of Florence—we must add a third. Alexander Borgia had already developed his plan of turning central Italy into a Duchy or Kingdom for his sons, and had commenced by seeking to despoil the Orsini. His first attempt was not successful. His troops were completely defeated by the Vitelli, lords of Città di Castello, and by the Orsini, and his son, the Duke of Gandia was wounded in the face.

But he soon recommenced his intrigues; when at this time a horrible tragedy within his own family appalled even the Italy of his day.

On 14th of June, in 1497, his eldest son, the Duke of Gandia, was assassinated in the streets of Rome: it soon became known that the murderer was no other than his own brother, Cesare Borgia, and the gossip of Italy whispered that both brothers had quarrelled over the favours of their sister Lucrezia. For once the Pope himself was completely overwhelmed. He deplored his sins, sobbing aloud, before his Cardinals in full Consistory, and declared that the vengeance of God upon his corrupt court had brought on him this chastisement.

Fra Girolamo had already dared in his sermons to denounce the life of that Court, in which the Pope's mistress, Giulia Farnese, called "Giulia the beautiful," shared a divided sovereignty with Vanozza and other ladies. When the Borgia, after his brief moment of contrition, very soon recommenced his old *train de vie*, with its political and social scandals, this Pope became more and more exasperated at the contrast which Florence presented, under Fra Girolamo, to Rome under the Vicar of Christ.

A truce had been signed for six months (on March 9, 1497) between the rulers of France and Spain, in which the Italian States were (in April) included; and Florence, now entirely abandoned by the King of France, felt it wise to treat the Papacy with some consideration. Negotiations

ARMS OF THE ART OF SILK.

By ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA.

(Church of Or San Michele, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.

right hand move as in benediction. His ashes were scattered into the Arno from the Ponte Vecchio, lest they might be kept as relics.

Yet he lived already, and will always live, in the inmost heart of Florence! On the day following his death, in spite of penalties, certain women were found to be kneeling devoutly on the spot where he was burnt : and to this day, upon his death day (as I have found in this year in which I wrote) fresh flowers of spring-time are strewn by unknown hands upon the spot which marks where the man, who—with all his faults and mistakes—sought to lead his City to liberty and purity of life, was burnt as “heretic, schismatic, and seducer of the people.”



THE NYMPH OF FONTAINEBLEAU.

From the Bronze by BENVENUTO CELLINI.

(Musée du Louvre, Paris.)

Photo Alinari. Florence.



CHAPTER V.

THE FALL OF FLORENCE.



URING the period which we have just traversed (1494-1498) Florence was too absorbed in her internal crisis to be productive in art. It is more than doubtful, too, whether the dominant influence of Savonarola during this period favoured such production. "The æsthetics," says one biographer of Botticelli, "of the fiery preacher were so childish and so poor : he repelled with such a monkish terror every hint of paganism, of sensuality; condemned without pity the nude, citing Aristotle for his authority; despised completely the beauty of form, and held account only of the spiritual beauty, of the purity of the soul penetrating the enveloping matter!... To the humble *Piagnoni*, coming to him from their shops and stalls, he gave his instructions on the blessings of an edifying use

of art. "The first painting that you must have in your house is a Paradise above, and a Hell below : place it in your room, so as to have it always under your eyes. The second painting is that of a sick man, with Death who knocks at the door. Lastly get a painting of a sick man in bed, who in his last moments repents him of his past sins."

Obviously a conception of æsthetics '*si infantine et si pauvre*' could not include even the great painters who were followers of Fra Girolamo, or, if it included them, was inimical to their artistic development.

It is doubtful if his influence over Sandro Botticelli's art was really fertilizing, and the same might probably be said of that graceful painter, Lorenzo da Credi. Baccio della Porta was a cloistered soul, "timid, yielding, industrious;" but upon him the effect of the Dominican monk's preaching was that for several of the best years of his life he practically abandoned his art. He had served his apprenticeship in the *bottega* at Florence of Cosimo Roselli; and it was here that he met Mariotto Albertinelli, who became his friend for life, and for many years his fellow-worker.

No characters could have been more unlike than those of the two friends. Baccio (1475-1517) was what I have described above : singularly susceptible to every influence, we find first Leonardo to attract him, then Raphael of Urbino in his early visit to Florence, then the cloister absorbs him as a monk of S. Marco. Mariotto (1474-1515), on the other hand, was a Pallesco, a Medicean partisan — "a loose liver, wilful, obstinate, inconsequent:" yet the two men were brothers in art, and perhaps their friendship gained from this very diversity of character.

My own favourite in Albertinelli's work at Florence is his *Annunciation* of the Accademia; even here he is uneven, but the colouring in parts is wonderfully rich, and the kneeling angel equal in beauty of type to that of Sandro in the same subject in the Uffizi. The Pitti, Uffizi, Corsini Galleries contain Mariotto's paintings : in his Borghese *Madonna* the composition is by his friend Baccio.



PORTRAIT OF LUCREZIA PANCITICHI.

Fac-simile in colours.

From the Painting by ANGELO BRONZINO.

(Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



Then came the great tragedy of Baccio della Porta's life. He had shared to the full in the religious revival of those years when Savonarola practically ruled Florence; had carried his life-studies out to burn them on the "pyre of vanities;" had seen that night of terror when the Frate was dragged from S. Marco,—had perhaps watched (like so many *Pia-gnoni*) in vain for some saving miracle when his leader was hanged and burnt in the Piazza. The iron of lost illusions entered deep into his soul; he withdrew into the monastic life, abandoned his beloved art, became known to the world as Brother Bartolommeo.

It was very probably his friend Mariotto's influence which induced him to take up his brush again in 1506. He seems to have worked with him at this time, and later, for the benefit of the S. Marco Convent. His great unfinished painting of *Our Lady surrounded by the Patron Saints of Florence*, commissioned by the Gonfaloniere Piero Soderini for the Hall of the Great Council, must be here mentioned. But a new star had now dawned on the artistic firmament; and Fra Bartolommeo when, in 1514, he visited Rome, sought to imitate the Titanic force of Michelangelo. The result was fatal. "To most people," says Mr. Berenson, "Fra Bartolommeo is a synonym for pomposity," and when we study his *Prophets* (Isaiah, Job) of the Uffizi "Tribuna," his *S. Mark* of the Pitti (painted in the very year of this Roman visit), or even his earlier *Virgin enthroned with Saints* of the latter gallery we feel them "inflated"—in the sense that a grand manner, which was not in the man's temperament, has been aimed at, merely because it was then considered the last thing in art.

With Michelangelo himself the case is very different: he paints grandly (even when he paints badly) because, with his temperament, he could not paint in any other way. Born in March of 1474, at Caprese, he had been first apprenticed in Domenico Ghirlandajo's *bottega* at Florence (1488). But, unlike the painter Baccio, Buonarroti's originality was too intense to model itself on any master.

Domenico's art, careful, sound, unimaginative, would have been excel-

lent as a training, but scarcely touched this scholar; for he had already fallen under the fascination of the antique. A visit to the Medicean gardens had been his introduction to the marvels of Greek art, and "The Magnificent," finding the enthusiastic boy at work there chipping out from the marble the head of a Faun, took him into his own household and treated him with characteristic kindness and liberality.

What a brilliant circle was that in which the young sculptor now found himself, in which new thoughts, ideas, inspirations streamed in upon him from every side. "Even the poet Angelo Poliziano—the tutor of Lorenzo's children, the translator of Homer, the most brilliant classic scholar of his epoch—could find a word of welcome and advice for the young beginner in his art, would suggest to him to treat in bas-relief some antique fable, the strife of demi-gods or heroes for a woman's favour. Pico della Mirandola, too, was there — famed for his learning and beauty and courtesy, — "tall and finely moulded" (says Poliziano) "with something of divinity in his face...." And beside him at Lorenzo's table would perhaps sit Cavalcanti, or Marsuppini, or the comic poet Pulci to give the lighter note, or Leo Battista Alberti, most fascinating of them all, the precursor of Leonardo, poet, scholar, painter, architect, mechanic, universal in his activities, in his deep inner sympathy with nature."

At his most impressionable age, the inspired youth shared to the full in that wonderful life of culture of the Medicean circle; but, on a sudden, the whole outlook for his future changed. Lorenzo died; Piero de' Medici, as we have seen, lost ground every day by some fresh blunder; the prospect seemed full of danger to the young *protégé* of the Medici, and with a couple of friends he left the city for Bologna. When he returned (in 1495) Piero was already ignominiously expelled, the French had come and gone, and the City of the Lily was under the Dominican monk's guidance. It was then that Michelangelo must have listened to that monk's wonderful sermons, whose memory never left his later thought; it was then (1496) that he carved his little *S. John* (S. Giovannino), and his

PORTRAIT OF LEONARDO DA VINCI

From the Painting attributed to Himself.

(Uffizi Gallery, Florence.)

Photo Minari, Florence.



Sleeping Cupid for those Medici who had remained, changing their hated name to that of "Popolani."

But the same year he went south to Rome to carve his *Pietà* of S. Peter's; and when he returned to Florence it was to obtain (1501) the commission for the great figure of *David* which Soderini, the Gonfaloniere of the city, had talked, says Vasari, of giving to Leonardo da Vinci. This writer tells us that the block of marble which was to serve him had been already handled badly by some previous artist, either Maestro Simone or Agostino, the sculptor of the Perugian S. Bernardino : it was for Buonarroti now to see what his genius could extract from it, and for his subject he chose the young Jewish champion of national liberty. Such a subject could not fail to appeal to the Florentines of this period : it was at this very time, and in the same spirit, that they set up Donatello's bronzen *Judith* on a pedestal before their Palace of the Signory, with the legend '*Exemplum salutis publicæ cives posuere.*'

The *David* (or "the Giant," as it was called from its colossal size) was commenced on September 13, 1501, and completed January 25, 1504. At the meeting held to decide its site the leading artists of the day were present, the sculptors Filarete and Della Robbia, the painters Cosimo Roselli, Botticelli, Perugino, Leonardo and Filippino Lippi, the last of whom suggested that the sculptor himself would probably have an opinion to offer as to the best position for his work. In accordance then with his own wish it was placed beside the Palazzo Vecchio, and stood there for three centuries, till (1873) it was removed to the Florence Accademia. In this heroic figure of a young man, entirely nude, "braced for a supreme endeavour,"—Buonarroti found the expression of his temperament. "The first person," says Mr. Berenson, "since the great days of Greek sculpture to comprehend fully the identity of the nude with great figure art was Michelangelo.... He saw that it was an end in itself and the final purpose of his art. For him the nude and art were synonymous." And this criticism applies most fully and exactly to his next artistic creation, which perhaps was the greatest and most

individual that he ever achieved, but which, unhappily, is now entirely lost to us.

For here he put forth his fullest strength and science of drawing : here his competitor was that great Leonardo da Vinci, whose name has come before us in connection with the *David*, and who had now returned from Milan to his native city. Piero Soderini, Gonfaloniere of the City, wished at this time to decorate the hall of the newly-made Grand Council, in the Palace of the Signory, with frescoes which should be commemorative of Florentine history ; and it was to these two great Florentine artists, masters, both of them, in both the sister arts, that the famous commission was offered.

The Palazzo Strozzi had been completed at this very time, and Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi had (June 16, 1504) entered it with his wife Lucrezia di Bernardo Rucellai ; and there they had celebrated their wedding with great festival. On the fourteenth of May in that same year (1504) the "Giant of Marble (the *David*) had been drawn by forty men very slowly, with strong ropes and the greatest care and skill, to its resting-place in the great Piazza, before the Palace, and "beneath the *ringhiera* where was the *Judith* ;" and now all Florence was alive with interest to see the decorations of this new Hall of the Council. "It was a contest of giants" — I have said elsewhere — "in which two mighty masters, each at their ripest moment of genius, put forth their full strength. Leonardo had chosen a contest of horsemen, a subject for which his Sforza monument had prepared his knowledge. Michelangelo felt his real strength to lie in his mastery of the human figure, undraped, full of male vigour and force ; and he chose an episode from the war with Pisa (1364), when Sir John Hawkwood and his riders surprised the Florentine soldiers bathing in the Arno in the summer heats. All Florence, art-loving, keenly critical, was tiptoe with interest and excitement to see their work's result."

This magnificent cartoon of Michelangelo survives only in Marcantonio's vigorous engraving. Young Raphael came to Florence from Perugia to gaze upon it ; and Cellini, who saw it too and who knew what good

A NOBLE FLORENTINE LADY.

Detail from the Fresco of "The Birth of the Virgin."

By DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO.

(Church of Santa Maria Novella, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



were opened between the Signory and the Pope; and it was under the cover of this negotiation that Piero de' Medici made a sudden dash at the City. He arrived before the Porta Romana in the early morning of April 29 (1497) with eight hundred horse and a large body of infantry. But the gates which he had hoped to have surprised were found to be closely guarded. His habitual indecision seems to have seized him, and he remained for four hours before them, hesitating whether to attack, and then stole away as quickly as he had come!

But his threatened attack had compromised his own friends within the city. Bernardo del Nero, who had just been Gonfaloniere, Niccola Ridolfi, Lorenzo Tornabuoni, and others were accused of cognizance of Piero's movements, and condemned to death.

By Savonarola's recent constitution an appeal to the people was in this case permitted; and an appeal would have probably saved their lives, for the whole charge was most doubtful. This appeal was not permitted by the dominant faction of the Piagnoni, under the Gonfaloniere Francesco Valori; and all the condemned were executed.

It is difficult not to feel that a word from Savonarola might have saved these men. Their terrible fate only accentuated party hatred, and added to his enemies at home.

For now the situation which had so many elements of danger was shaping itself into a duel between himself and the Borgia Pope. Against the Dominican monk Alexander VI. had launched the facile accusation of heresy, and had forbidden him to preach in public; he next endeavoured to corrupt him by the suggested offer of a Cardinal's Hat. The offer was rejected with scorn, coming from such a source: the crown that he coveted — said the unflinching monk — was that red crown of martyrdom.

And, in defiance of the Pope's Interdict, but at the request of the Signory of the Republic, he again entered the pulpit of the Duomo: in February of 1496 he preached his great sermon from the text of Amos. "It is in the Carême of 1496 on Amos and Zachariah," said Milman, "that the preacher girds himself to his full strength, when he had

attained his full authority, and could not but be conscious there was a deep and dangerous rebellion brooding in the hearts of the hostile factions at Florence, and when already ominous rumours began to be heard from Rome. He that would know the power, the daring, the oratory of Savonarola must study this..."

It is the scene which Mereschkowski describes, in his *Romance of Leonardo*, "within that Duomo of Florence, where, in the year 1495, thousands crowded to hear the preacher of repentance. In his black and white habit, his face yellow as wax, Savonarola ascends the pulpit, throws back his cowl, lays his hand upon the crucifix, and with the eye of a hawk passes the faithful in review. Such silence reigns that each man hears the beating of his own heart. And through this stillness of the tomb rings the voice of the Dominican..... *Gladius Dei super terram cito et velociter*. The signs of the Apocalypse are being fulfilled. Lo! the heavens are dyed with blood: it rains brimstone: pestilence, war, and famine herald the Day of Wrath. *Fuge, fuge, O Zion, quæ habitas apud filiam Babylonis*."

But here let us turn from the page of romance to the preacher's own words: let us hear that one ringing voice speak to us, which echoed once through the silence of the crowded Duomo. "*Flagella venient!* However incredulous thou mayst be a great war shall make thee leave behind thy pomp and pride. The barbarians shall come to strip Italy bare to the bone. Thou hast fear of one alone; but trust to me that it shall not be one alone. More than two shall they be who will strip thee in such fashion that they shall not leave even a hair upon thy beard.

"Women! a great pestilence shall make you leave behind your vanities and countless raiments with all your finery. Citizens!—if you will not live in the fear of God and agree among one another in the love of the common good and this government, God will make you suffer, and your shrewdness and wordly wisdom shall avail you nought (You know well that it is written *Comprehendam sapientes in astucia sua*); and the blessings promised to this city of Florence God will give instead to your children,

THE VISIT OF THE VIRGIN TO SAINT ELIZABETH.

From the Fresco by DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO.

(*Church of Santa Maria Novella, Florence.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



who commence already to grow old in wisdom beneath this governance which God has given you.

“And you, old men, wicked and inveterate in sin (forgive me, ye old men who are of good life!), I say to you that not only do you not wish to do good, but you even hold it ill that the youths and children do good. If you do not speedily amend your ways, God will punish you both in this world and the next..... And thou” (he speaks here directly to Rome) “old hag, who art full of the devil’s spirit, who art more vain of thyself than are the children, and holdest it for evil that the children dress modestly and live honest lives, God shall find thee out, and he shall punish that devilish soul of thine!”

The challenge was thrown out from the monk in his convent cell at S. Marco to the Borgia in the rich “appartamento” of the Vatican—filled with tapestries and gold and silver plate, with Pinturicchio’s frescoes on its walls; and from henceforth it was a duel to the death.

But the weakness of Savonarola’s position was threefold. In the isolation and weakness of Florence, who had trusted to the French monarch’s support and found him but a broken reed, it was necessary for the Signory—however much their sympathies might be with Fra Girolamo—to treat the power of Rome with consideration; to temporize and parley in this matter of the offending preacher.

At the same time there was evidently a tremendous reaction forming within the city against the Frate’s party of the “Piagnoni;” and Savonarola himself, in the struggle with Rome, never would go to the length of his great successor in Church reform Martin Luther, by denying the Pope’s authority and burning his bulls. While he blamed and detested the man he upheld the dignity and sanctity of his office—assuming a hazardous attitude of obedience to the Church, whose head and chief he yet defied.

Meanwhile the interdict laid upon the rebellious city (for the Pope had now excommunicated Florence) dissatisfied the populace, who were deprived of the sacred rites, and injured her merchants in the markets

of the world : and the many enemies of the Frate without Florence (at their head Piero de' Medici, who saw in his power a fatal obstacle to his return) never ceased to urge the Borgia to crush his enemy.

The tension within the city at this time was intense. Though the Signory, with Francesco Valori as Gonfaloniere, was still sympathetic, it was beginning to find the great preacher a political difficulty; and Florence was becoming divided up into sharply defined parties,—the devoted adherents of the Frate, called the *Frateschi* or *Piagnoni* (Weepers) — the *Arrabiati*, who disliked his domination but were equally opposed to a Medicean tyranny—the friends of the Medici, the *Bigi*, who at this time felt it wise to keep very quiet; and lastly a new party of young men, called the *Compagnacci*, who were in open revolt against the reform of morals and his ordinances, and took every opportunity to insult Fra Girolamo and to interrupt him in his sermons.

Already on Ascension day, of 1497, scenes had taken place within the Duomo, when the Frate's preaching was interrupted by blows struck by some unknown person with a great hammer and by cries of "Gesù," which terminated in an armed conflict; and in 1498 the Signory found itself compelled to entirely suspend his preaching in the Cathedral. In this crisis Savonarola did not shrink. One resource was left to him — to convene a general council of the Church to depose the Pope. He wrote letters with this object to the different monarchs of Europe, one of which, addressed to Charles VIII., was intercepted and fell into the hands of Pope Alexander VI.

In the midst of this excitement a Franciscan monk, who was preaching at Santa Croce, declared that he was ready — since Fra Girolamo declared his doctrines sent from Heaven and supported by miracles, — to prove them false by entering with him into the ordeal by fire. It was the old rivalry between the orders of S. Francis and S. Dominic which asserted itself in this crisis. Against the Frate's own wish—for he saw in the whole proposal a trap for his ruin — his own Dominican monks took up the challenge; and finally it was permitted by the Signory that

PORTRAIT OF GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA.

From the Painting by an unknown Artist.

(*Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.

IOAN. PICVS • MIRANDVLA



Fra Domenico da Pescia, one of Savonarola's firmest friends and supporters, should enter the flames with a Franciscan monk, Fra Andrea Rondinelli.

On the morning of this fantastic and cruel test a great scaffold was to be seen, in the midst of the Piazza of the Signory, which connected itself by a passage with the Loggia de' Lanzi. It was ten feet in height and eighty feet in length, piled close with faggots; and through this furnace of flame the two monks must pass either to martyrdom or miraculous victory.

All Florence, and not Florence alone, but the surrounding countryside, was depopulated, and packed in an excited crowd within the old Piazza: "and now at the fixed hour arrived the brethren of S. Francis, and entered the Loggia of the Signori, and took their place toward S. Piero Scaraggio without saying a word. And then came they of S. Marco with the greatest devotion, a great number of Frati, about two hundred and fifty, walking two and two; and then Brother Domenico with a crucifix in his hand; and then Frate Girolamo with the Body of Christ" (*i. e.* the Host) "in his hand; and behind there came a great crowd of people with many torches and lights, singing and chaunting psalms with great devotion. When they were entered into the Loggia, they had prepared an altar, and celebrated the Mass: meanwhile the people awaited without this great spectacle." But one difficulty after another presented itself,—a whole series of petty monastic squabbles and scruples. First "those of S. Francis declared that Fra Domenico must strip to his drawers, declaring that he was bewitched" (*i. e.* that he carried on himself some charm), "and he" (after much discussion however) "agreed to do this." Next they started another difficulty, "that he must not go into the flames with the Body of Christ."

But here Fra Girolamo stood absolutely firm for his man. It was sacrilege, said the Franciscans, to carry Christ's Body into the furnace. It was the one thing, said Savonarola, which could preserve his devoted friend from the flames, and bring to him the desired safety by miracle. We see the excited group of monks, going backwards and forwards between

the Loggia and the Palace, occupied with their discussion—a matter now of hours, interminable, exasperating, endless. We see the people without, who had been there since the morning,—balked of their spectacle, hungry, tired, getting more and more impatient,

At last, the shadows of night approach... and nothing has yet been done: the Franciscan party retire in the direction, probably, of Santa Croce: the Dominicans return to S. Marco, a shower of rain descends to drench the exasperated spectators—the whole ordeal by fire is a complete *fiasco*! Nay more, to the angry populace, breakfastless, dinnerless, wet to the skin, it is a fraud: their boasted Prophet appears now as an impostor! It was in vain that Fra Girolamo hurried back to S. Marco, entered the pulpit, explained to his adherents the real causes of the delay and difficulty. Already his cause was lost—and he was doomed!

The day following was Palm Sunday; and the trouble which was brewing began at Vespers within the Duomo.

Men were hustled, women roughly treated, there was a tumult in the Church, and a rush for the door, and “in a few hours all the city was in arms, all of them who were against the Frate, and especially that Company of the Compagnacci, uttering threats against San Marco and crying:—*To the Frati! To the Frati! To San Marco*; and all the people and children ran after with stones; so that many men and women who were within San Marco could not come outside on account of the stones.”

It was a night of hell! All the resentment and fury of those whose friends and kinsmen had lately perished on the scaffold, all the passions which had been repressed during the four years of monastic rule had broken forth and clamoured for vengeance! “Towards the twenty-second hour there came into Piazza certain banners and armed men, crying aloud *Popolo*,—men who were nearly all of the *Compagnacci*; and they began first to speak and then cry aloud—“*A casa Francesco Valori! A Sacco!* (To Francesco Valori’s house. Let us sack it!) and ran there and set fire to the house and sacked all that was in it.” Francesco Valori himself was dragged forth with the promise of his life, and led to the Palace of the

THE VIRGIN ENTHRONED, WITH SAINTS ATTENDANT.

From the Painting by FRA BARTOLOMMEO.

(Uffizi Gallery, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



Signory; but on the way Ridolfi, whose kinsman had but lately been executed by the Piagnoni, threw himself upon Valori and killed him. In the sack of his house his wife had been wounded to death, his daughters and women-servants wounded, and everything stolen.

Meanwhile the fighting was going on around S. Marco, and the crowd there constantly increasing.

“It was about the sixth hour of night that they burst the door which led into the church and cloisters of S. Marco, and entered the church still fighting. The Frate was at the last found in the choir, chaunting the Holy office, and there came forth two friars, and said to them. “We will give you the Frate, if you will give him safe conduct to the Palace,” and so it was promised them : and at the seventh hour they gave up the Frate, and Frate Domenico, and Frate Salvestro, and they were led away to the Palace with many insults on the way.

“It is said that there were some who gave them blows and kicks and cried to him, ‘Take that, you wretched fellow (*Va là, triste!*); and irons were put on his legs and wrists, and he was held very close as if he had been some great evil-doer, and many vile words and insults were used to him.”

A messenger was sent the same day to the Pope to tell him that his enemy had been captured; and Alexander, who sought no less than his life, insisted that this leader of heresy should be handed over to his tender mercies. But here the Signory refused : the trial must be at Florence, and they sought from Rome only two ecclesiastical judges to take part in it. Turriano, General of the Dominicans, and Romolini were carefully instructed, before they left, by the Pope himself that Girolamo Savonarola was a heretic, a schismatic, a persecutor of Holy Church, a seducer of the people; and the whole trial was a judicial murder, on whose details it is painful to linger.

Savonarola was a man of intensely nervous organization. He had lived upon his nervous force, with him trance and fast had been followed by outbursts of marvellous oratory or intense mental activity : and the horrible

methods of that time accompanied examination with torture. What he confessed under these conditions is immaterial, and what Nardi says on this point seems very true.

“When they asked the Frate about what he had said and affirmed in his examination up to that day he replied to them that what he had said and foretold in past times was all true, and what he had said that day and withdrawn was all false, and caused by the great pain and the great terror that he had of torture, and that again he would repeat and withdraw as often as he was tortured again, since he knew himself to be weak and inconstant in supporting this torment.” The flesh was weak—but the spirit, how noble, how willing to the last!

At the end, tiring of this horrible farce of justice, they pronounced the sentence which was his martyrdom.

Once more the old Piazza was crowded with spectators... but this day (the 23rd of May in 1498) they were not to be baulked of their spectacle: many were there among his enemies, and many, too, among his friends, who (it is clear from the records of the time) awaited some sign from Heaven in his favour.

In an old picture, which is preserved within S. Marco, we see the scene, with, in the centre of the Piazza, the great bonfire, where the three monks were to be burnt after they had been defrocked of their orders.

Upon the *ringhiera* this ceremony took place, with words befitting their degradation and declaring Fra Girolamo a heretic and schismatic. The first to be hung was Frate Salvestro, the confidant of Savonarola's visions, then came the turn of Fra Domenico, and both these men died with the holy name of Jesus on their lips. As the Bishop of Vasona removed from Fra Girolamo his friar's robe, and said the words—“I separate thee from the Church militant and triumphant”—Savonarola answered him—“Militant, yes; triumphant, *no!* *That* is not yours!” “He spoke” (says Landucci, who was probably then in the Piazza) “clear, but in a low voice; and so he was hanged.” When the flames reached the body he was already dead, but some, who watched closely, thought they saw the

THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS.

Fac-simile in colours.

From the Painting by LEONARDO DA VINCI.

(*Musée du Louvre, Paris.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



draughtsmanship was, is lost in astonishment and enthusiasm, — “so splendid is the action,” he says, “that nothing survives of ancient or modern art which touches the same lofty point of excellence.”

Nor did Leonardo fare better, for seeking a new method of encaustic painting, — or rather, perhaps, to revive the methods of the ancients, — his whole fresco when heated became ruined; and the relics of these two masterpieces of “that marvellous Florentine school” were covered in the next generation by Vasari’s hurried commissions for his Medicean patron. Michelangelo went south (1505) to serve Pope Julius, and to waste the best powers of his life on that “tragedy of the sepulchre;” while Leonardo busied himself with that wonderful portrait of *Madonna Lisa*, wife of Francesco del Giocondo the Florentine, which is now in the Salon Carré of the Musée du Louvre.

“La Gioconda,” said Pater, “is Leonardo’s masterpiece, the revealing instance of his mode of thought and work.... We all know the face and hands of the figure set in its marble chair, in that cirque of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea.” And Muther, in a recent appreciation of Leonardo, compares its setting with that of the *Virgin with S. Anne*, or that of the *Virgin of the Rocks*. “For Mona Lisa he has divinely created the very world in which she can live. For she is far from our world, this woman, she dwells in some fairyland we cannot fathom or grasp. We cannot unravel the secret of her laughter, or divine the mystery of her thought : and so she rightly dwells within a mysterious world of twilight of her own.” The great artist himself passes very soon from our city’s history to end his life in the service of the King of France; and we have now to trace that city’s history in the new century which was beginning.

We have just seen something of the wonderful artistic efflorescence in the first five years of that century, when the fair city seemed to reassert her enthusiasm for beauty, after four years of almost monastic discipline; when the great David was set in the place chosen by its creator beneath the old Palazzo; when Leonardo painted his *Madonna Lisa*, and

Michelangelo his *Holy Family* for Angelo Doni—the patron whose portrait, with that of his wife Maddalena Doni, young Raphael of Urbino had painted at Florence (probably in 1505) when he was to some extent under Leonardo's influence. To the same time are due some of the young Umbrian artist's loveliest Madonnas, — those works which are so divinely fresh and clear in sentiment; notably that exquisite *Madonna del Granduca* which is now in the Pitti Palace, and the noble *S. Catherine* of the London (National) Gallery—painted a little later (1507), but still under Florentine influence. The *Madonna del Cardellino* (Uffizi), the *Belle Jardinière* (Louvre), the *Colonna Madonna* (Berlin), the *Tempi Madonna* (Munich), the smaller painting at Chantilly and the Panshanger Madonna all belong to his early period of Raphael's life; and in his *Madonna del Baldacchino* of the Pitti Palace we see distinct traces of Fra Bartolommeo's influence.

The internal government of the city was at this time still strictly Republican; the Grand Council—that excellent political institution of the martyred Dominican—still flourished; and Florence during these years presented a happy contrast to the rest of the peninsula. For the history of Italy in these first thirty years of the sixteenth century, to those who love her genius and her soil, is a heart-rending story. She had given to Europe, in her Renaissance, art, letters, the culture of the antique past, the beginnings of modern science; and in return she was invaded, insulted, outraged, made desolate. That first mad-cap adventure of the French King Charles had laid bare to Europe her riches, her beauty and her weakness; and now from every side the invaders poured into her, pillaged her cities, ravaged her country, and quarrelled among themselves over the spoil.

But now the terror was to come very close to Florence herself. Though the Grand Council still continued, the necessity in these troublous times of a single magistrate—in a sense a kind of Dictator, who should be present at every Council meeting, and should keep the secrecy and continuity of foreign negotiations and policy—had been felt; and in 1502

PORTRAIT OF ANGELO DONI.
From the Painting by RAPHAEL OF URBINO.

(The Pitti Palace, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



the Council had chosen Piero Soderini for that office. He was a man generally respected for his high character and integrity; and his most important service to the Republic was the reconquest of Pisa, in 1509. It is significant of the condition to which Italy was now reduced that before the Florentines were allowed to enter the city they had at last recovered they were compelled to pay 100,000 florins to the King of France, and 50,000 to Ferdinand of Aragon, for their approval. They now sought, by tardy justice and conciliation, to recover the affections of the Pisans; but it was too late. Those of the inhabitants who had preserved any means emigrated rather than endure their rule, and the city became, what it is now, a dead city, — whose memories (enshrined in that group of buildings around her Duomo) go back to her Republican past.

When the French were, at length, practically driven out of Italy by the "Holy League" of Pope Julius the condition of the unfortunate natives was in no way bettered: there remained the Spaniards, the Swiss, and the Germans, and these new masters seemed even worse than their predecessors. The Swiss now held Lombardy in their power, and were engaged in plundering it without mercy: the Spaniards, in turn, sought for a province which should be their prey, and Tuscany, rich, unwarlike, and hitherto almost unscathed by the ravages of war, was a tempting booty.

At a conference held by the victorious army at Mantua the Medici, who were present, begged to be restored to their country, promising their aid to get a heavy contribution as reward. Raymond de Cardona accepted their proposal, constituted himself their champion, and advanced on Florence across the Apennines at the head of 5,000 Spanish infantry: his conditions were that Florence must recall the Medici, dismiss the Gonfaloniere of the Republic, Piero Soderini, and pay to the Spanish army 40,000 florins.

The news of his advance reached the city about the 21st of August (1512), and at once the Signory commenced clearing the country-side of

provisions and driving mules, live-stock, and waggons full of grain into the city, so that at last 50,000 florins worth of stores had come into the Palace : through the great gates of S. Gallo, Prato and San Frediano the country-folk, with their poor women and children and what goods and live-stock they could save, were crowding in during these days, until the whole plain between Prato and Florence was cleared — “and who saw these poor folk, with their little left that they had saved, must needs shed tears of pity.”

On the 24th of August the news came that the enemy had not yet passed Barberino, but was doing great mischief as he advanced.

Then, five days later, came the news of the fall of Prato. For a sympathizer with Florence it is difficult to restrain his anger at the hopeless incompetency and want of backbone shewn by her Government and people at this crisis in their story.

Two courses were open to her Signory, — either to accept the terms offered by the Viceroy, or to make a firm and vigorous resistance; and it seems as if either policy might have been crowned with success. The Spaniards, who were now before Prato, were a small force comparatively, and had found the Val d'Arno swept clear of supplies : already provisions began to fail them, and it is likely that a vigorous attack at this moment might have ensured their retreat or total destruction.

But the Gonfaloniere Soderini hesitated and temporized. “It seemed a divine judgment,” says Landucci, “that our leaders acted so slowly when we had 18,000 troops ready, and really had more men than they (the enemy); we had already hindered their provisioning in such wise that within three or four days they could not have escaped dying of hunger; they would all have been dead men or prisoners.” The fact was that Soderini, though a man of high character and experience, was not the man for this crisis; and, yet more, it seems as if these eighteen years of war since the first French invasion had broken and daunted the once free Italian spirit.

Thus came that tragedy of Prato, which completely terrorized the cities

PORTRAIT OF MADDALENA DONI.

From the Painting by RAPHAEL OF URBINO.

(The Pitti Palace, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



of Pistoja and Florence. The Spaniards, suffering already from hunger and knowing that Prato was richly supplied, made a resolute assault : one of their two pieces of artillery burst, but with the other they made a breach in the walls, and at the first blow the country militia fled before them. Death was the instant reward of their cowardice ; and then followed the most pitiless and terrible massacre and pillage of all the defenceless inhabitants. "The Spaniards," says Sismondi, "surpassed on this occasion all the cruelties which had been committed by the conquerors of Brescia or of Ravenna. The number of unfortunates who were massacred, without striking a blow in their defence and without the slightest provocation, is estimated as, at least, 5,000. All the houses of the city and all its churches were plundered with the most excessive severity ; and the poor citizens, when deprived of all they possessed, were still further subjected to the most horrible tortures in order to excite the compassion of their friends and relatives, and thus induce these to ransom them from their captors. The great Church alone" (*i. e.* the Cathedral), "where a certain number of the women had taken refuge, was excepted from these horrors, through a safe-conduct obtained for it by the Cardinal de' Medici." We may picture the choir of the Cathedral—where we have studied together Fra Lippo's frescoes—filled with these trembling fugitives, crouched together, as they heard from the Square without the cries of the tortured and dying. "For those cruel and unbelieving half-bred Moors" (*Marrani*—a term of reproach used by the Italians to their Spanish invaders) "slew every man who came before them, and it did not suffice them that they had so great a booty that they should spare to any man his life; and if there remained any alive they seized them and extorted ransom from small and great in the most cruel and unheard of ways, and when they had no money to give they subjected them to the most horrible torments. And convents they put to the sack; women and young girls they misused with every cruelty and outrage; and it is said that 5,000 persons were left dead.... And these wicked men remained so provided with victuals and means that

they could remain as long as they willed, and had all become rich with such a great booty, and both we and they of Pistoja lost all hope of ever conquering them."

This result was seen when both Pistoja and Pescia, on the 30th of August, in terror of assault "brought the keys of these cities to the camp of the Spaniards and made terms with them;" and on the day following (August 31) a company of young nobles from the families of the Ruccellai, Tornabuoni and others, who were attached to the Medicean tradition and the memory of Lorenzo, entered the Palace of the Signory, deposed Soderini, and sent word to the Spanish Viceroy that they were ready to accept his terms.

On the 1st day of September, 1512, Giuliano de' Medici entered Florence; on the 8th of the month Giovanni Battista Ridolfi was chosen as provisional Gonfaloniere, in place of the exiled Soderini; and on the 14th the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici arrived in the city from Prato — "not as Legate of Tuscany, not surrounded by priests and monks, but with an escort of Bolognese infantry and men-at-arms from Romagna. Then with this guard he went to his house in the Via Larga, receiving there as a sovereign for two days the homage of his subjects."

"And now on the 16th of September Giuliano de' Medici and all his company went to the Palace of the Signory with armed hand, and took the Palace without encountering any resistance whatever. Then needs must be called the *Parlamento*, and the great bell rang out at the twenty-first hour, and the Signory came out on the *ringhiera*, and read out the conditions" (of the government) "which were these: that twelve men should be chosen for each quarter, who should represent Florence for one year, and could do or undo, and have power over each and every office in the city. They sent out a decree that whose willed might come into the Piazza without arms. Yet none the less the Piazza was full of armed men, and every street and issue from it held by men-at-arms, crying all the time '*Palle*,' and the same within the Palace itself up to the very belfry; and some of those of the people who had entry to

THE GENIUS OF THE MEDICI.

By GIAN BOLOGNA.

Pitti Palace, Florence.

Photo Alinari, Florence.





the Palace cried out that they were content with the "parlamento" (*esser contenti col parlamento*), and with the new form of government."

Thus the Medici had at length returned to their city; and before long Giuliano and Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici were joined by their nephew Lorenzo, son of Piero de' Medici, who had been drowned; and with them they brought three bastards of the Medici blood, — Giulio de' Medici, who afterwards became Pope Clement VII., Ippolito de' Medici, and Alessandro who was to become Duke of Florence — all three of them names which were to have a sinister import in the city's later history. Their great fortune had been dissipated in their long exile, and "their first thought on returning to Florence was to raise money for themselves, as well as for the Spaniards, who had re-established their tyranny."

For the Spanish Viceroy, now master of Prato and with Florence at his feet, had raised his terms; from 40,000 florins he had risen to 60,000, with the entrance of Florence into his "Holy League," and then yet further to 120,000 florins. Meanwhile the intense indignation of the crushed Florentines at the news of these horrors of Prato (which still continued at a few miles distant) found expression in isolated acts of vengeance, which might have brought reprisals upon the city. Certain Spaniards who entered the city to sell their plunder from Prato were set upon by the people, and others were absolutely torn to pieces: and, in spite of the severest penalties by the Signory, every day these secret reprisals are reported. Finally "on the 12th day of September the money was handed over to the Spaniards.... and on the 20th of September, 1512, those men more cruel than devils left us, and left Campi and all the countryside, and went by the way they came, and lodged the night at Barberino; and many country folk left here, and returned to their homes with all their poverty to face."

Fortune's wheel had turned; and the fickle jade, who so long had frowned upon the Medici in poverty and exile, now turned upon them all her smiles. For only six months after their return to Florence came the

news (February 21, 1513) of the death at Rome of Michelangelo's patron, 'the terrible Pope,' Julius II.; and then, upon the 11th day of March, there came to Florence "the news, and it proved true, that Cardinal de' Medici was Pope, and was to be called Pope Leo X." The report had come the night previous, and created an immense stir in the city, although at the Palaces of the Signory and of the Medici they said that they knew nothing about it : but now that it was absolutely confirmed the whole city went wild with excitement. It was partly, no doubt, the legitimate pride of Florence that her champion had won this greatest prize of Christendom ; but it was also the day of triumph of the 'Palleschi,' the Medicean party. Bells were ringing, bonfires burning throughout the city ; and the poor *piagnoni* had that day many hard words said to them by the exultant 'Palleschi.' "And this nuisance" (*questa pestilenzia* — says Landucci, whose sympathies were obviously with the Frate and his followers) "lasted all that Friday and the Saturday, with the letting off of fireworks in the Palace, upon the cupola" (of the Cathedral), "at the doors of houses, and in fact everywhere, with such and so heavy salvos of artillery, and continual cries of '*Palle, Papa Leone!*' that it seemed as if the whole city was upside down ; and anyone who saw it would have said '*Florence is on fire through the whole city*'—such was the shouting, and the bonfires, and the smoke, and the fireworks small and great ; and then all Sunday it was just the same, and Monday it was worse than ever."

But even these rejoicings were put into the shade when "on Saint Andrew's day, the 30th of November, 1515, the Pope entered Florence with such great and triumphal honours and such incredible expense that words fail to tell of it." The scenes must have been a very wonderful pageant, when all the leading citizens went forth to meet him, with more than fifty youths of the best and richest families, all clad in the rich costume of the *cinquocento* — '*una livrea di veste di drapi pagonazzi, con vai al collo*' — "a costume of purple cloth, the fairest sight to see ; with very many citizens on horseback, and the Pope had with him many folk on foot, and among the others he had the Papal Guard, very many German

THE VIRGIN IN THE LAP OF SAINT ANNE.

From the Painting by LEONARDO DA VINCI.

(Musée du Louvre, Paris.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



foot-soldiers; and on horseback many archers and musketeers, all of his guard. And he was carried by the Signory beneath a rich canopy through the whole city, and set down at Santa Maria del Fiore, and went up through a raised gangway (*palchetto*) to the high altar; and the said church was all adorned with rich hangings, and with a canopy in its centre; and so many torches were ablaze that the whole circuit of the church was filled with them up to the doors, and besides this the two other galleries of the cupola were ablaze with torches all around, and even the gangway that went from the door up to the choir was full of the aforesaid lights and torches."

Florence must have surpassed herself in this wonderful reception when the great Renaissance Pope, the patron of Raphael, the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, revisited his native city. For now he had left the Duomo and "turned down towards Santa Maria Novella, always giving the benediction, with many trumpets and flutes going before him, and the people following in such crowds that it was tiring even to look upon them."

It is time for us now to leave Pope Leo X. in this day of his triumph, as he passes beneath the Gate of the Pope (*Porta del Papa*) which led into the *Sala del Papa* of S. Maria Novella, with above him as he entered many quaint fancies and devices, and among them the nine Beatitudes of the Gospel, '*Beati Pacifici*,' '*Beati mundo corde*' — "all perfect figures, not made by rough artisans, but placed there by men of great worth and power" — and to turn our attention to the art creations of this period. In the decoration of the *Sala del Papa*, which I have just mentioned, it was, in some part, the sculptor Baccio Bandinelli who had been employed, but I prefer to leave him till he comes before us in a later period of the Medicean rule, and take here some notice of the painters of Florence at this epoch.

Greatest certainly among these in the assured grasp and mastery of his craft was Andrea del Sarto, who gained the name of "the faultless painter." It is to be noted at this time that the artists who attained

celebrity in such a known centre as Florence were frequently tempted to leave her by an offer from outside, — and often now from without Italy herself.

We have seen Leonardo to emigrate first to Milan, and then to France, the brilliant sculptor and architect Jacopo Sansovino to have settled in Venice. Raphael and Michelangelo went to serve the Popes in Rome, the sculptor Torrigiani came to England, the painter Rosso, and Benvenuto Cellini himself at a later date, to the French King in Paris.

To Andrea Vanucchi, called del Sarto from his father's trade, the same offer (in 1518) was made; but before this he had already made his position in Florence — a position which his admirable frescoes in the fore-court of the SS. Annunziata fully justify. Here we have seen Alessio Baldovinetti and Cosimo Roselli to precede him, and Marc Antonio Franciabigio, Jacopo Carucci (called from his birthplace Pontormo), and Il Rosso worked as his contemporaries; but, among all these, it is Andrea who really excels. His subject here was the *Story of S. Filippo Benizzi*, which he treated in five panels (1509-10); but most admirable I found him in his *Adoration of the Magi* (which contains his own portrait), and even more so in his *Birth of the Virgin* (dated 1513), in which the upright and seated female figures in the centre of the painting seem to have been taken from his wife. Andrea had been invited (in 1518) to the French Court by Francis I., and for that monarch had executed a number of paintings. But he had married a beautiful young widow at Florence, Lucrezia del Fede, and this union proved the ruin of his career; for it was probably her influence which drew him back to Florence, and induced him to squander a large sum of money which the French King had entrusted to him for the purpose of purchasing works of art. He lost position in his own city through this conduct, and he could never return to Paris. It is possible that the painting of himself with Lucrezia, holding an open letter, had some reference to this incident in his career : the expression of his face, here looking out on us, is intensely pathetic.

But he still remained the most brilliant craftsman of his time in

PORTRAIT OF STEFANO COLONNA.

From the Painting by ANGELO BRONZINO.

(Corsini Gallery, Rome.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



Florence, and naturally had always sufficient commissions : amongst these numerous *Holy Families*, *Depositions*, *Assumptions*, and portraits of himself and others let us select two paintings which are masterpieces. The first of these takes us back to the SS. Annunziata, but it was painted in another part of the cloisters to his earlier frescoes, and at a later date (1525). The *Madonna del Sacco* is painted in fresco and represents the Holy Family resting, — the sack which is introduced beside the Madonna giving the picture its name.

It is not a large fresco and is treated in the simplest way; but technically it is a masterpiece. How bold the handling, how faultless the drawing of the nudes and the drapery, how cool and restful the colour scheme! There is none of the hard precision of the earlier *quattrocento* work here : the cool grey vaporous tones suggest the atmosphere; and the figures, full of ideal beauty as they are, fascinate us equally by the correctness of their values.

His *Madonna delle Arpie* of the Uffizi was painted in the new oil medium, of which he was as complete a master as of fresco painting. The subject here is the Virgin and Child with S. Francis and S. John the Evangelist; and the picture gained its name from the Harpies, carved on the base of the column or pedestal on which the Madonna stands. Most nobly conceived is this Virgin, in whose figure Andrea seems for once to escape from his too frequent model, Lucrezia, to some higher vision : in the child Jesus I trace here something of the attraction of Correggio. The colour scheme too is cool and restful, with greys predominant : we can seldom see more faultless drawing of the nudes than in the left hand of the Virgin or the left arm and hand of S. John, or better handling of the draped form than in this grey-robed S. Francis.

It is at rare intervals only that Pontormo approaches Andrea's artistic level; but one of these instances, surely, is his *Visitation* of the SS. Annunziata fore-court. Here (I wrote in my notes before this fresco) he compares with Andrea del Sarto, and in the beauty of colour and refinement of drawing of this fresco almost rivals the *Madonna del Sacco*. But else-

where he falls very far below this standard, as in his *Martyrdom of forty Saints* of the Pitti Palace; though his *Adoration of the Magi* in the same collection has a fine landscape background, and his male portrait there (in profile) is excellent. The fact is that Pontormo, like other artists of this time, fell, to his detriment, under the influence of the 'Michelangesque.' To find a glaring example of this we have only to look at his *Venus and Cupid* of the Uffizi Gallery. The Venus here is of Herculean build, a perfect giantess, — all brawn and muscle, with a fair layer of adipose tissue above, — and anything less seductive than his version of the Goddess of Love could scarcely be imagined; but we feel that, like Fra Bartolommeo in his later draped figures, so too Jacopo Carucci in this naked female imitated coarsely the Titanic, without anything of its grandeur in his own sentiment.

Near Pontormo's displeasing *Martyrdom* in the Pitti, we find Francesco Granacci, a Florentine painter who belonged to this period (he dates 1477-1549), with a *Holy Family* which is uninteresting and uninspired. But it would be unfair to judge him by this work alone. He had begun as a pupil of Ghirlandajo, coming later under the influence of Pontormo and of Fra Bartolommeo, and is well represented in the European galleries; while among his Uffizi paintings the *Life of S. Joseph* is to be noted. Besides the large religious subjects there was evidently a demand for these smaller panels of stories in oil-painting, of which Marcantonio Franciabigio's *Story of David and Bathsheba* in the Dresden Gallery (in four panels signed with his initials, and dated 1523) is a good example of finished careful drawing and clean colour.

Franciabigio had been a pupil of Albertinelli and that earlier master of pictured story, Piero di Cosimo; and, coming to work beside Andrea del Sarto in the fore-court of SS. Annunziata, he no doubt came under the influence and attraction of that great master.

For his fresco here of the *Virgin's Betrothal* is quite excellent, and, like Pontormo's *Visitation*, marks a high level in his art: in his background he has introduced a fine Renaissance cortile, and painted into

DAVID.

By MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI,

(Academy of Fine Arts, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



it a relief of the *Temptation* and *Expulsion* from Eden. In his frescoes of the Chiostro dello Scalzo too he approaches Andrea; and here will be perhaps the proper place to mention Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, — the son of Domenico, whose oil paintings (in the Uffizi) of the *Story of S. Zenobio* reach a very high level of merit, — and that attractive artist Rafaellino del Garbo (1476-1524), the scholar of Filippino Lippi, whose works have something of the grace and refinement which is possessed by Lorenzo da Credi.

The Florentine Il Rosso, whom we have already noticed (1494-1541) was a pupil of Andrea del Sarto, and painted, beside his master's frescoes at the SS. Annunziata, an *Assumption of the Virgin* which cannot be highly praised, and is certainly below the level of the frescoes there by Andrea, by Pontormo, or by Franciabigio. He was tempted by the offer of King Francis to leave Florence for the Court at Paris, and was employed there on the decoration of the palace at Fontainebleau. But Pontormo in his worst phase, that of the exaggerated 'Michelangelesque,' had now come to influence him. Primaticcio, the pupil of Giulio Romano, was here his successor at the French Court; and "thus" (I have remarked elsewhere), "to this northern nation, eager of acquiring the culture of the Renaissance, there was offered only the overblown classicism, the coarse colouring and the sensuous fantasies of Giulio and his following. In such a source there was no fount of living inspiration."

The brilliant court of Leo X. at Rome, — which saw Raphael of Urbino's marvellous artistic career, surrounded by a group of brilliant followers, which saw the creation of the Stanze and Loggie of the Vatican and the frescoes in the Villa Farnesina, the discovery of many antiques and the formation of the great collections of statuary, and which was adorned by the presence of many brilliant men of letters and by a lavish outpouring of wealth on every side — gives a glamour to this period of history, and hides the fact of the terrible condition of Italy, nationally degraded and economically ruined. When we speak or think of the Renaissance we are too apt to be attracted by the brilliancy and glamour of this Papacy

of Leo X.; but the true Renaissance, from which this Court derived whatever it possessed of real merit, is to be found twenty years earlier, and before the foreign invasion of Italy.

At the period we have now reached, as Sismondi points out, the Sovereign Pontiff and the Republic of Venice were the only two powers in Italy which still preserved any shadow of independence; and the Papacy at that time was exceptionally powerful. Florence was really dependent on Leo X.; the Republics of Sienna and Lucca were equally at his disposal; and the aggressive policy of Julius II., his predecessor, had brought the rich cities of Parma, Piacenza, and Modena into the possession of the Church. But Rome, like the rest of Italy at that time, was really at the mercy of the invading armies who were devastating the peninsula.

Venice alone, through her unique position among the waters, had some security against invasion, some possibility (fortunately for us) of continuing unchecked her development; but the whole apparent splendour of Rome at this time was based on the sand, and the death of Leo X. (Dec. 4 of 1522) soon shewed the real weakness of her position.

Already, not long after that Pope's triumphal entry into Florence, Giuliano de' Medici, Duke de Nemours, had died, on March 17, 1516, four years after his recall and at the age of twenty-six. Lorenzo de' Medici (the son of Piero and father of the famous Catherine de Médicis, Queen of France), who was as much hated by the Florentines as even his father Piero, but who had been created by Pope Leo Duke of Urbino, died also only three years later, and his place in the Government of Florence was taken by the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, son of that Giuliano who had been killed in the Pazzi conspiracy. The Papacy of Leo X.'s successor, Adrian VI., was a short one, but even so must be called a failure : he could neither satisfy the party of culture, carry out any complete reform of morals, nor advance the position of the Church. He died in December of 1527; and was succeeded in the Papacy by no other than Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, who assumed with the tiara the title of Clement VII.



SELF-PORTRAIT OF MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI.

From the Painting by MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI.

(Uffizi Gallery, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



Had Cardinal Giulio never been Pope he would probably have gone down to posterity with the reputation of a great churchman and a man of moderation and political insight; and it is only fair to remember that he succeeded to the Papacy in times of exceptional difficulty.

The French had returned into Italy to enforce their claim to Lombardy; but their competitor was now Charles V., with all the resources of the German Empire and Spanish monarchy, and after a murderous battle at Pavia the French King Francis I. was defeated and taken prisoner. This was in 1525, and in the year following the Imperialists were living at free quarters in Lombardy, while the Spanish army, quartered on the unfortunate Milanese, was occupied with the same methods of torture and plunder which had signalized its occupation of Prato.

At this moment a German Condottiere named Frundsberg entered Lombardy, with a following of 13,000 men, whom he had engaged to serve the Emperor without pay, living on what they could plunder from the natives. Rome was a tempting morsel, and the Constable de Bourbon, — joining the troops in Milan to this horde led by Frundsberg, and thus bringing up their total to 25,000 men, — marched on the city, arriving before its walls on May 5 of 1527. The city was unprepared, was taken by assault, and submitted to a sack which excelled by far, — as on a far greater scale, and for a far longer period, — all the worst horrors of Brescia or Prato. “For seven months” (I have said elsewhere) “the Pope and his fellow prisoners in the Castel S. Angelo must behold this tragedy enacted in all its detailed horrors, to which the plague became added.... From the horrors of that awful judgment Rome never recovered; the brilliant city of Julius and Leo, the Rome of the Renaissance perished then, and could never reappear.”

The immediate effect of the sack of Rome on Florence was the fall of the Medici dynasty. That dynasty had been intimately associated with the Papacy through Pope Leo X., and still more closely through Pope Clement VII.; and the fall of Rome and degradation of the Papacy

weakened their position in the city of the Medici. There was no violent revolution; but the leading citizens demanded of the two Cardinals Ridolfi and Cortona, who had been left to rule for the young princes Ippolito and Alessandro, that the Republic should be restored. The Signory was re-established, Niccola Capponi made Gonfaloniere of the Republic, and the young Medici with the Cardinal of Cortona and Filippo Strozzi left the city quietly for Poggio, and later for Pisa.

Niccola Capponi was the son of that Piero Capponi, whom in the last generation we have seen to have braved King Charles VIII. of France. He was a strong Republican in principle, but moderate in his political views and conduct; a man of strongly religious temperament, if he was not himself a *Piagnone* he had the sympathy of that party. Another result of the horrible sack of Rome — the plague, which had appeared there after the excesses of the victors had brought the entire population into a state of frightful misery, — had penetrated to Florence in spite of every precaution. When the Grand Council of Florence, on the restoration of her liberty, reassembled in their great Hall not more than ninety citizens were present, who regarded each one another with distrust, even when they joined their lamentations of the dear ones they had lost. It was at this time, when the plague was already ceasing in its virulence that Niccola Capponi addressed the members of the Council (February of 1528) in words which Fra Girolamo might himself have used, — speaking of the mercies of God and his compassion, and calling to Heaven for pity.

The whole Council followed his example, falling on their knees with the cry of '*Misericordia*;' and Capponi, in this moment of enthusiastic fervour, carried the decree that Jesus Christ should be declared forever King of Florence, and his name placed as such over the main entrance door of the Palace of her Signory.

The city had, indeed, then sore need of God's help and mercy. The Pope and Emperor had come to terms, and by the treaty of Barcelona Charles V. arranged to hand over Florence to the Medici, in the person

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

By MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI.

(Chapel of the Medici, San Lorenzo, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



of Alessandro de' Medici, who was to take to wife his illegitimate daughter, Margaret.

These conditions were confirmed at the historic meeting of Pope and Emperor at Bologna (1530), where Charles received the crowns of Lombardy and the Empire, and where the Republic of Florence alone was expressly omitted from the general pacification of Italy.

Those very armies which had just ravaged and desolated Rome were now employed by Clement VII. against his native city; and in 1529 had entered Tuscany under the Prince of Orange, had pillaged Spello, and occupied Cortona, Arezzo, and all the upper Val d'Arno. Florence stood alone at that moment to brave the Imperial power, which had now become absolute in Italy : and the very city which, in 1512, with 18,000 men at her disposal, had flinched and failed before 5,000 Spanish infantry, — had seen Prato sacked, her women insulted, her citizens tortured, and herself mulcted of an immense ransom — now showed herself possessed of heroic courage.

One fact alone was in her favour, though insufficient now to save her. Niccola Macchiavelli, who had died in 1527, had long endeavoured to raise among his fellow citizens enough military spirit to trust to themselves, as of old, for their defence, instead of to paid soldiery. By his efforts the country militia, or *ordinanza*, had been formed into regiments; and what good material there must have been in this peasantry is shewn by the fact that the famous *Bande Nere*, who, led by Giovanni de' Medici, had restored the reputation of Italian troops through Europe, were almost exclusively recruited from Tuscany.

The hero Francesco Ferrucci, himself a Florentine, had been trained to war in these *Bande Nere*. He was stationed without the city as commissary-general of the Republic, his purpose being to collect supplies and recruits, and to harass the enemy; within Florence Malatesta Baglioni, of the famous Perugian house, held command, and to Michelangelo himself, who at this crisis had come back to fight for his city, was entrusted the care of her fortifications.

It was a splendid act of courage, even if it were also an act of folly, a spectacle which stirs us even now — this bold little Tuscan Republic facing alone, without a friend to aid her, these Imperial banditti who had ravaged all Italy, and now thirsted to hold her at their mercy, for murder and outrage and plunder. They may still have looked northward in their need, these citizens of Florence, to the *fleur-de-lys* of France; but King Francis, in making his own terms, had entirely sacrificed his allies; and Florence had been left by him at the mercy of the Emperor. Yet she still held out, and the success of Ferrucci, who captured Volterra from the Imperialists, gave her a gleam of hope. With great courage and daring he now proposed to sweep Tuscany of recruits, to fall upon the camp of the Prince of Orange before the city, and force him to raise the siege. But the odds against him were too enormous; he was hemmed in on all sides at Gavignana, near S. Marcello in the Pistoiese, 2,000 Florentines fell fighting around him, and he himself died pierced with many mortal wounds. "The Republic," it has been said, "perished with him:" no nobler epitaph than this could be found. And within the city herself treachery was at work. Malatesta Baglioni, who had been in correspondence with the enemy, opened a bastion to them, and planted his artillery so as to command the town. The Signory, seeing themselves betrayed, sent to Ferdinando da Gonzaga, who now commanded in the place of the Prince of Orange (for this latter had been killed by Ferrucci in his last heroic stand at Gavignana), to say they were ready to capitulate. The terms were not of extreme rigour. Florence must pay a gratuity of 80,000 crowns to the besieging army, and recall the Medici; in return an amnesty was granted to all who had opposed the Imperialists and the Pope.

But Clement had probably little intention of keeping to these milder conditions; once in power of the city he summoned a *Parlamento* and created a Balìa, which should be the instrument of his vengeance; and by its means he killed, tortured, and exiled all those leading families who had opposed his return, so that in one year there were more than 1,000 victims.

GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE.

By FRANCESCO DA SAN GALLO.

(National Museum, Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



Fra Benedetto, who had upheld the Florentines by his preaching, was starved by inches (his bread each day diminished) in the lowest dungeon of the Castel Sant' Angelo; and Michelangelo took hiding for his life, it is said, within the bell-tower of S. Niccolo in Oltr' Arno. Condivi tells us that "when Clement's fury abated he wrote to Florence to search for Michelangelo, adding that, when found, if he agreed to go on working at the Medicean monuments, he should be left at liberty."

It was then that the sculptor completed within the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo those two statues of the dead Medici—Giuliano de' Medici, Duke of Nemours, and brother of Pope Leo X., and Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, the son of Piero de' Medici—with those four marvellous nude figures which have been called *Day and Night, Twilight and Dawn*. "It is the doom of Italy" (I wrote elsewhere) "crushed at length beneath the iron heel of the barbarian; it is the struggle of the Soul, bound down by destiny to conditions from which its happier growth seeks vainly to escape, waking from dream-tossed sleep only to front again the hollow vision of lost hope; it is such thoughts as these—the drama of the inmost sentiment, not the pure physical beauty of Hellenic art—that comes to us from these terrible nude forms.... When the statues were exhibited to Florence, compliments, congratulations, sonnets were rained upon the sculptor; and indeed with reason.... But Michelangelo would have none of these Academic compliments; and the reply which he placed himself beneath the *Night* shows better in what mood he had conceived the subject.

'Happy am I to sleep, and still more blest
To be of stone, while grief and shame endure.
To hear naught, to feel naught is my great gain;
Wherefore speak softly—and awake me not!'

The sculptor's health had suffered at this time from the past strain, and his life was probably in danger from the enmity of Duke Alessandro, who now held Florence in his power; he withdrew to Rome, and no pressure or entreaties would induce him to ever revisit his enslaved city.

For Alessandro de' Medici, now Duke of Florence, proved a tyrant of the worst kind. "Alexander," says Dumas, "had almost all the vices of his epoch and very few of the virtues of his race. The son of a Moorish woman (*Mauresque*) he had inherited her ardent passions; constant in hate, inconstant in love, he tried to assassinate Piero Strozzi and succeeded in poisoning his cousin the Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici. Gian Battista Cibo, Archbishop of Marseilles, sought to take advantage of the love affair of Alessandro with his sister, who lived in the Palace of the Pazzi, to have him killed one day when he was coming to see her in this Palace." But Alessandro wore beneath his vest habitually a mail jacket, which was proof against sword or dagger; and this conspiracy, like many others against him, failed. Yet one conspirator was not meant by destiny to fail in his purpose; this was his kinsman and companion in licentiousness, Lorenzino de' Medici. The whole story — which is narrated very fully and very dramatically by Dumas, and which has been the subject of a brilliant play by De Musset — is one of those sombre domestic tragedies which became only too frequent in Florence in this epoch of the Medicean domination. Lorenzino, a frail insinuating creature, had wormed himself entirely into the confidence of the despot Alessandro; "*c'était son bouffon, c'était son complaisant, c'était son valet, c'était son espion, c'était son amant, c'était sa maîtresse;*" but within this confidant's breast there lurked always, for some inscrutable reason, the purpose of murder. First he decoyed from his victim the jacket of mail which would have foiled his dagger, and threw it down a well; then, profiting by the tyrant's desire to possess the wife of Leonardo Ginori, a woman of great beauty, he lured him to a trap, and, with the aid of a bravo named Scoronconcolo, killed Alessandro while he was half asleep; and, leaving the dead body in his Palace of the Larga, took horse to Venice.

There, when he told the exile Filippo Strozzi of his fell deed, he was welcomed by him as a second Brutus: but Florence was already too far enslaved to profit by an accident to recover her liberty, and could only exchange one master for another.

THE FOUNTAIN OF VENUS.

By GIOVANNI BOLOGNA.

(Royal Villa of Petraja, near Florence.)

Photo Alinari, Florence.





What one feels is that at this time in Florence, as similarly in the history of Rome, party hatred had grown so intense, so embittered that any form of self-government had become, even in the opinion of her better citizens, a thing impossible; and, as the Romans had rallied around the Julian House, so the Florentines of this period found in the Medici domination their only issue from these interminable and inveterate civil rancours.

Therefore it was that Cosimo, — head of that younger branch of the House which has already crossed our story in Piero's days of blunder, and son of that famous Captain of war, Giovanni de' Medici, who had led the Tuscan bands to victory, — was elected (1537) "not as Duke but as Governor of the Republic." It was a distinction without a difference, as the sequel proved : but Cosimo, still quite a young man, found his early path beset with difficulties.

Yet this Cosimo the second possessed the qualities which had led his ancestor to success : shrewd, persevering, prudent, yet on occasion lavish, "he had all the vices that darken private life and all the virtues which make a public career brilliant."

Under his politic guidance, Florence became again a city of culture, and his Ducal Court thronged not only with courtiers, but with artists, men of science, and men of letters. The Florentine Academy was founded by him, and held its sittings, first in his Palace of the Via Larga, and later in the Sala of the Grand Council in the Palazzo Vecchio, — that Sala which Michelangelo had adorned, and which was now disused since the fall of the Republic. The ancient University of Pisa, which had been patronized by "The Magnificent," and since neglected, was reopened by Cosimo; the Laurentian Library he opened, too, to the research of scholars, a printing press was established in the city, and such scholars as the famous Paolo Giovio or historians as Nardi welcomed to his court. And at the same court he had gathered a group of brilliant sculptors, in whose work we find an efflorescence of this favourite Florentine art.

The greatest of Florentine sculptors, Michelangelo Buonarroti, had, as we have seen, settled in Rome, and thither had followed him later Montelupo, who had carved the *S. Damiano* under his guidance in the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo; while the Florentine Montorsoli (who had created its pendant figure of *S. Cosimo* in the Sacristy) had settled in Naples—being driven from Florence, it is said, by the intrigues of Baccio Bandinelli. But Bandinelli, though freely employed by Duke Cosimo at this time, does not by any means represent the high-water mark of Florentine sculpture of his period, if we are to judge him by his clumsy seated figure of Duke Cosimo's father, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, now placed at the corner of the Piazza S. Lorenzo, or his *Hercules and Cacus* of the Piazza della Signoria.

Perhaps the most perfect and typical creation of this later school of Florentine sculpture is the bronze *Perseus* of that artistic genius and deadly rival of Bandinelli, Benvenuto Cellini, who had returned from the French Court to take service under his own Duke. The Greek demi-god stands upright, his bared falchion in his right hand, and in the left holds aloft the snake-bound head of Medusa, upon whose maimed body his left foot rests. Beneath in a bronze relief we see him rescue Andromeda from the sea-monster; and the marble pedestal, with its smaller bronzes in the niches, is of extraordinary richness and beauty. The *Perseus* stands yet where it was first placed, within the Loggia dei Lanzi, where too is Gian Bologna's marble group of the *Rape of the Sabines*; but we must visit the Museo Nazionale, a few streets away, to see this latter's *Mercury*—that most airy creation of solid bronze, whose winged feet scarce seem to touch the earth.

All these artists were employed by Duke Cosimo for his private as well as his public commissions. It was Gian Bologna who modelled and cast the bronze *Venus* of his Villa Petraja, to crown the fountain which Tribolo had designed; it was Gian Bologna, too, who competed (unhappily for us without success) for the design of the fountain in the Piazza Signoria. Meanwhile Baccio Bandinelli was decorating for the Duchessa



PERSEUS WITH THE HEAD OF MEDUSA.

By BENVENUTO CELLINI.

(*Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence.*)

Photo Alinari, Florence.



Eleonora those beautiful gardens of the Pitti Palace, which Duke Cosimo had now acquired, Tribolo designing that fountain at Castello which Anmanati's figures of *Hercules and Antæus* adorned, Giorgio Vasari decorating with his frescoes the old walls of the Palace of the Signory, designing the new Palace of the Uffizi, destined to accommodate the government offices of the new Duchy, and throwing across from this, beside the Ponte Vecchio, the covered passage which was to unite it with the Ducal Palace of the Pitti.

Meantime beside the great equestrian bronze of Duke Cosimo in the Piazza Signoria Anmanati was creating his fountain, where a marble Neptune is surrounded by satyrs and female figures in bronze; and Angelo Bronzino painting that wonderful series of portraits — of which we may select the *Eleonora da Toledo*, and the infant *Don Garcia*, the *Maria de' Medici*, *Alessandro*, *Cosimo* himself and the grand *Bartolommeo* and *Lucrezia Panciatichi* as examples — which, in their hard, precise touch, give us the very life and atmosphere of this half-Spanish Medicean Court. All these artists lived in the court circle of Duke Cosimo, who himself was a man of very varied tastes and knowledge, and would clean (*nettare*) a bronze antique while Cellini held the chisel, working together like two brother craftsmen in his *guardaroba* or dressing-room : who had (for his age) a good knowledge of botany and chemistry, could dress a wound, and with the Fiesolan Ferrucci's aid discovered the means of cutting the hardest porphyry, and used this material for the Statue of *Justice* which still crowns the column before Santa Trinità in the Via Tornabuoni. His family life forms a dark background to this brilliant career. There are stories of troubled mystery, — of a son slain by his own hand, — of the death from grief of the Duchess Eleonora, and (if we are to believe the anecdotal Dumas) of some secret scandal connected with the fate of his beautiful daughter Isabella : what is certain is that, from this time forward, with these later Medici — as at Mantua with the Gonzaghi — with all their unrivalled power and opportunity there followed equally unbridled passions and frightful hidden tragedies

of domestic vengeance. The Villa at Cerreto Guidi comes here to one's mind, with that hole in the bed-chamber ceiling whence the rope descended with which her Orsini lord strangled Isabella de' Medici, even while she yet embraced him; and if reports speak true, and ghosts are anywhere on earth, they are to be heard of in those old Villas of the Medici without the city.

But in his external policy, no less than his home Government, Cosimo's rule meant consolidation and success.

The *fuorusciti*, the exiles who had invaded Tuscany, were first lulled by him into false security, then captured in the Castle of Montemurlo; and consigned by the Duke to torture and his headsman (four victims led out daily into the old Piazza), or to a more lingering death in the prisons of Pisa, Leghorn and Volterra. Their leader Filippo Strozzi escaped the fate intended for him (of torture followed by death) by cutting his throat in his prison, having written upon its walls this verse from Virgil — '*Exoriare aliquis nostris de ossibus ultor.*' ('May some avenger arise from our flesh and bones!')

Similarly Lorenzino, the murderer of Duke Alessandro, though he for some time escaped his fate by constant journeys through Turkey and through France, hiding himself from every eye, was finally assassinated (at Venice, in 1547) by Cosimo's agents. Nor did the Duke of Florence trust those who had raised him to his throne, among whom the Cardinal Cibo, Vitelli, commandant of the Citadel of Florence, and the great historian and politician Guicciardini were the most important. The Duke owed these men too much to desire their company: on one pretext or another they were driven from the city, and died in disgrace, — in the case of Guicciardini not without suspicion of poison.

Then alone Cosimo felt that he was secure from his friends as well as his enemies, and could commence to reign. Tuscany was in great part already subject to him; he stood firm in the favour of the Emperor Charles V., and the two remaining Republics of Lucca and Siena now attracted his hunger for territory. But the "Lucchesi," by heavy bribes

BUST OF COSIMO I. DE' MEDICI.

By GIOVANNI DELL' OPERA.

Opera del Duomo, Florence.

Photo Alinari. Florence.

gained support in the council of the Emperor, which saved them from aggression ; and the cruel policy by which Cosimo eventually annexed Siena to his dominions lies without the period included in this work.

We leave Florence at this point under the strong government of her new Duke, saved from the internal war of faction, becoming every year more contented in her servitude. We leave her at the point in which the storm-tossed but glorious history of her Republic, with its spiritual strivings, its beauty of art culture, its political instability and weakness, is definitely ended; and that of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, with its Medici rulers beneath the shadow of Austria, definitely commenced.



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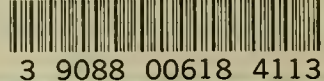
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